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TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK ...AND HOMOSEXUAL

BLACK PRIDE IN THE BIG APPLE

SOUTH AFRICA'S BONGANE NYATHI: Activist, Minister, Gay Games Gold Medalist

CLEO MONAGO: Hate Crimes! Who Gives A Damn? Who!

ONE ON ONE WITH REVEREND ALFREDA LANIOX of Unity Fellowship Church

SKIN DEEP: The Human Cost of Physical Idolatry

AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!!

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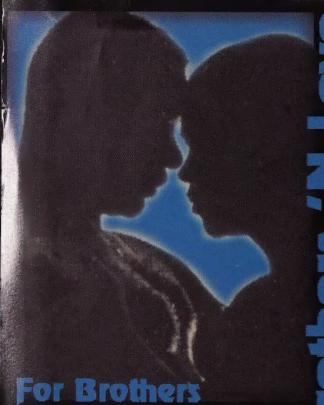

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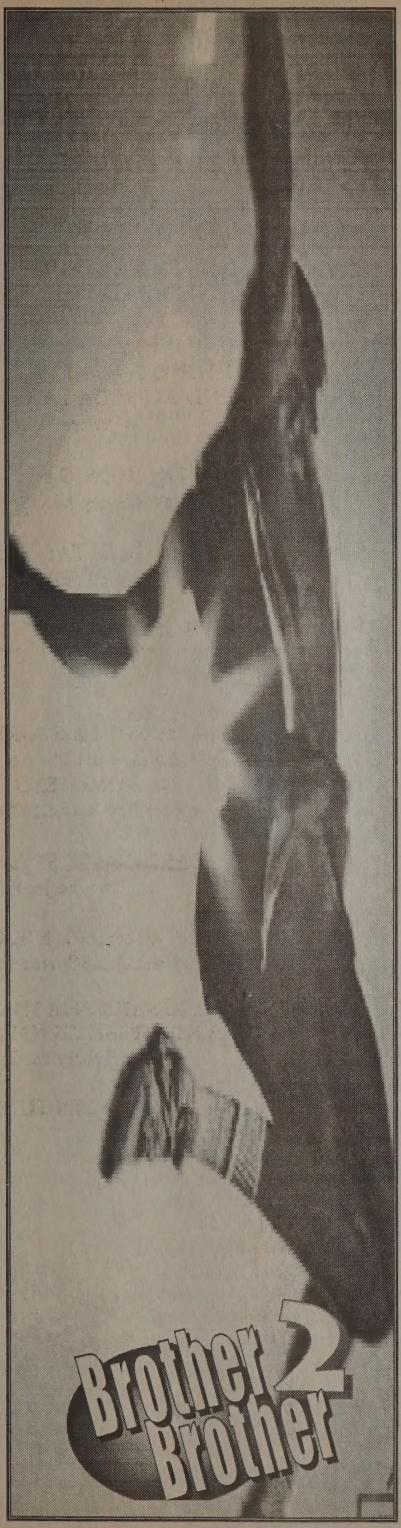

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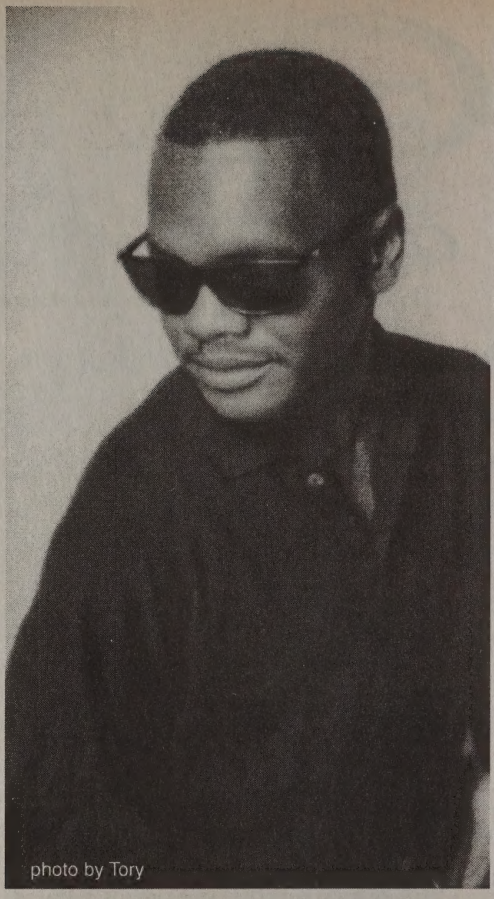

photo by Tory

The recent mid-term elections said it all. We are 'the man'. For the first time in history the so-called 'minority vote'---Latinos, African-Americans, and Women---toppled the juggernaut of white male political superiority and indifference in America.

Our ancestors spent too much blood, sweat and tears to build this country only to turn it over to those who want to take it away from us.

Register now. Keep abreast of the issues. Be aware of how your political employees are running your country. Remember who's boss. By the year 2,000 every Latino, African-American, and Woman 18 or older should be registered and every registered Latino, African-American and Woman should vote our interest, because if you don't vote, you don't matter.

We are not the 'minority vote'.

We are THE LAW!

(LATINOS/AFRICAN-AMERICANS/WOMEN)

Stanley Bennett Clay

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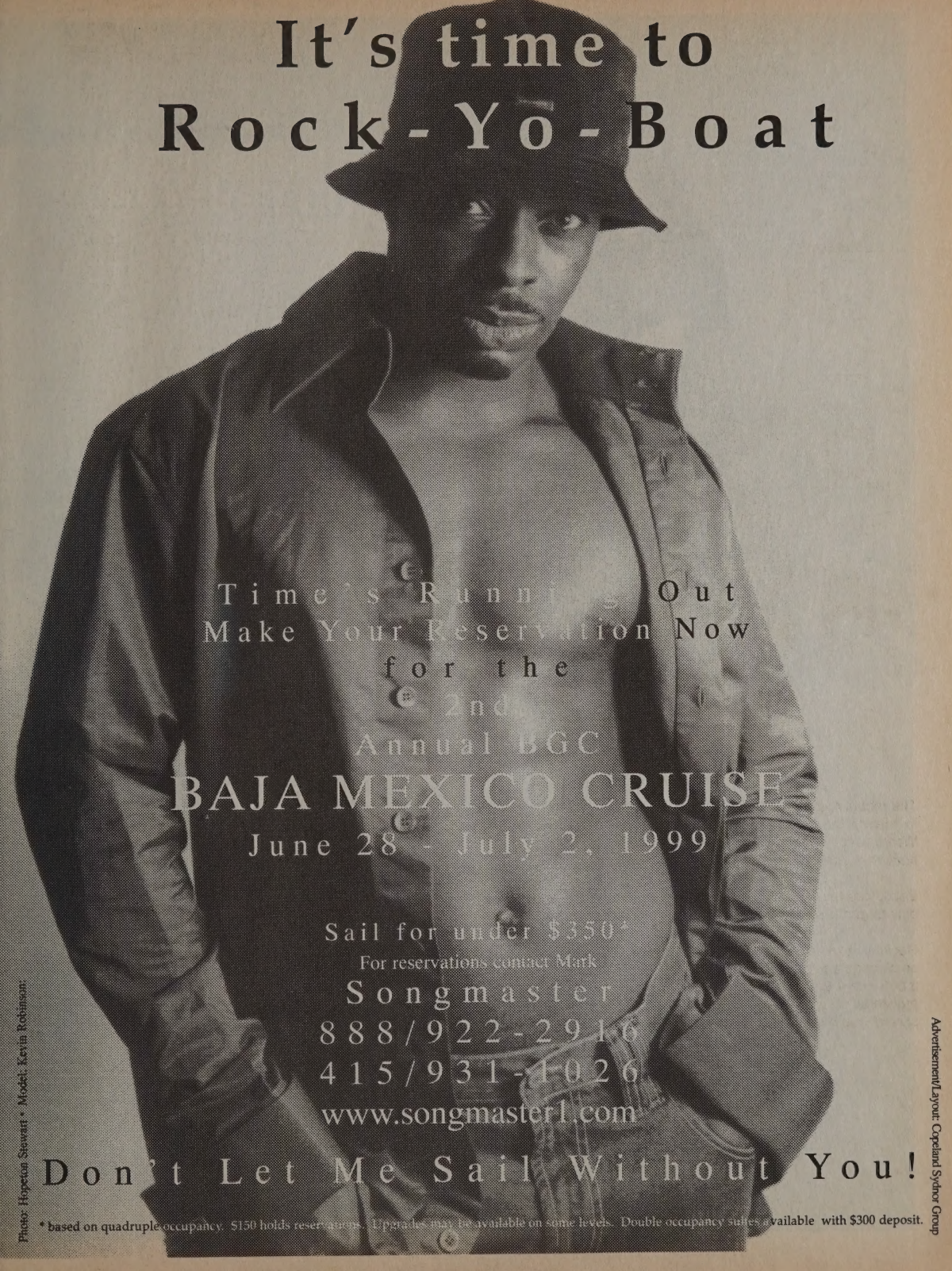
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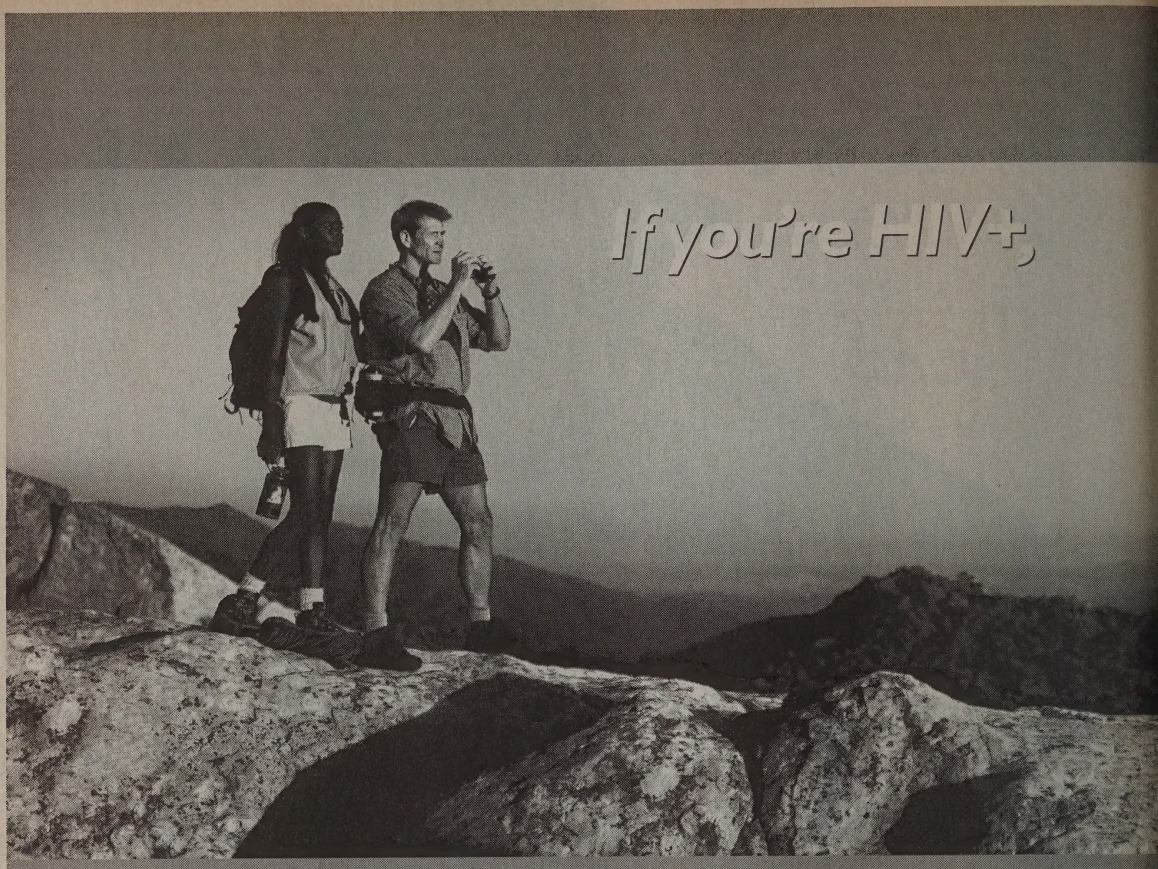

Being HIV+ isn't easy.

It's a daily challenge that can take all you've got. It helps to have an advantage -- to lighten your load and keep you going. Federal healthcare guidelines now call for including a potent protease inhibitor as part of combination treatments to fight HIV. Consider these reasons to make the protease inhibitor CRIXIVAN the foundation of your treatment regimen.

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 -T cell count. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

New NIH research showed people taking CRIXIVAN in triple therapy lived longer and experienced fewer opportunistic infections.

Recent year-long research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (Protocol ACTG 320) studied over 1,000 patients and confirmed results from another study.

The group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. This reduction was significant enough for the NIH to recommend the study be stopped, so that all participants could benefit from the findings. Because the study was ended early, there was insufficient data to determine the statistical impact of CRIXIVAN on survival.

CRIXIVAN in triple therapy continues to hold serum viral load down below the limit of detection at the one year mark.

In a separate, ongoing landmark study, over 90% of the 31 patients receiving CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their HIV serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks (as measured by available tests; the virus may still be present in other organ systems).

Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one year mark.

CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated.

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. There are side effects associated with protease inhibitors in general and CRIXIVAN in particular. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems. There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

As with other protease inhibitors, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Please read the following page for detailed information on side effects and dosing.

CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.

CRIXIVAN is the number one choice of doctors.*

CRIXIVAN is prescribed for more patients than any other protease inhibitor. With this commitment to CRIXIVAN comes a commitment to product improvements and further research in the battle against HIV. CRIXIVAN is being studied in a broad range of patients and in many different combinations. Ask your doctor for the latest news and developments.

* IMS America; 3/96 - 2/98.

Focus on the rest of your life.

Learn all you can about HIV therapy. Talk with your doctor. Stay informed and stay the course. With viral load below the limit of detection and an increase in CD4 T-cells, it's easier to look forward to the future with confidence.

Please read the following page for more detailed information about CRIXIVAN.

Remember to ask your doctor about CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
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Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, you should read the information included with CRIXIVAN each time you receive your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this information does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays." If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:
   - dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   - corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?**

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine) — HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam) — HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride) — Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)
DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)
isoniazid (INH)
ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)
BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this page alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

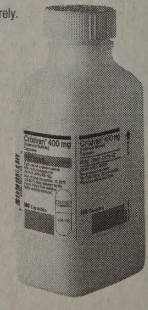
Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: abdominal swelling; inflammation of the kidneys; increased fat appearing in areas such as the neck, abdomen, and back; change in skin color; severe skin reactions; hair loss; crystals in the urine; and allergic reactions.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.



How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°F-86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication is prescribed for a particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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CRIXIVAN®
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Capsules

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FORMER PRESIDENT OF ZIMBABWE, ACCUSED OF SODOMY, FLEES COUNTRY

Harare, Zimbabwe---The first Zimbabwean president, Canaan Banana, fled the country on the eve of his indictment by the High Court in Harare which found him guilty of almost a dozen charges of sodomy, attempted sodomy and indecent assault.

On Thursday, 26 November, the local media reported that the former president flew to neighbouring Botswana without a passport, but according to more recent information, it is suggested that Banana is now in South Africa, a country which rejected anti-homosexual laws not long ago.

The scandal involving the 63-year-old Methodist minister, a married man with four children, erupted in February last year, during the trial of his former aide, Jefta Dube.

At the time, Dube, a soccer player and policeman, was sentenced to 10 years in jail for the 1995 murder of a fellow police officer who tauntingly called him "Banana's wife".

Later, Jefta Dube claimed that he was allegedly raped by President Cannan Banana in the State House. The court heard testimony from witnesses such as Banana's cook, gardener, and others with similar accusations.

Banana, who was Zimbabwe's first president (in office from 1980 to 1987), rejected all the accusations, saying that there was a "conspiracy against him."

He also appealed to the Harare court, claiming negative pre-trial publicity in the media had prejudiced his right to a fair hearing.

The state prosecutor, Augustine Chikumira, informed the court today that a warrant of arrest had been issued for Banana.

It is widely believed that the scandal has shocked President Robert Mugabe, a well-known critic of homosexuals, who has been quoted as saying that they were "lower than pigs."

Robert Mugabe (74) has repeatedly attacked homosexuals, making inflamatory remarks, saying that even "animals in the jungle are better than these people because at least they know that this is a man or a woman." According to this President, the sexual activities of homosexuals are against Christian beliefs and God will one day punish them.

Mugabe has also condemned the World Council of Churches for its reported acceptance of the Gays and Lesbians Association of Zimbabwe (GALZ) at its conference which is due to take place at the beginning of December in Harare.

The attack drew sharp criticism at the time from almost all over the world, including Amnesty International which published a statement condemning "a heavy-handed attack upon the fundamental human right to freedom of expression, to which the Zimbabwean government is ostensibly committed under its international legal obligations."

Amnesty International went on to emphasize that every living person has the right to freely hold and express his or her convictions, and to be free from any kind of discrimination, including by reason of their sexual orientation.

Soon after his attack on Zimbabwean homosexuals, Mugabe found himself under fire when he faced violent demonstrations at Ian Smuts international airport in Johannesburg when he arrived to attend a regional meeting.

According to South African media, several hundred South African gay and lesbian activists and their sympathizers forced Mugabe and his entourage to leave the airport through the back gate.

These polemics continued with foreign participants after a group of around 70 members of the US Congress sent a letter to the Zimbabwean president, pointing out that "when individuals are mistreated by a government because of some basic characteristic of their nature, human rights are violated."

However, Mugabe soon responded in his characteristic manner, publicly sending the following message, "Let the Americans keep their sodomy, bestiality, their stupid and foolish ways to themselves...Keep those out of Zimbabwe...We do not want those kinds of behavior in our country."

Later on, he added a new twist to the story, asking his critics, "The reply to those against my stance on homosexuality is: can they prove to me that they can get pregnant?"

In the democratic South Africa of President Nelson Mandela, gays and lesbians walked freely in the streets of Johannesburg during their recent "Pride parade."

"The pride parade is our celebration of our self-awareness, we respect our individuality, and celebrate tolerance and humanity, and the right to love the person of our own choice," claimed one of the organisers of the march which was possibly the largest gathering of gays and lesbians on the African continent.

However, South Africa is the first country in Africa whose constitutional court recently declared that consensual sexual intercourse between members of the same sex is no longer unlawful.

Last week in Denver, Colorado, Nobel Peace prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu said that persecution of homosexuals was as unjust as apartheid.

He was quoted in the South African media as saying that, "sexual orientation is just like race in that people do not decide to be gay any more than they decide to be black or white."

However, the Namibian Home Affairs Minister, Jerry Ekandjo told Parliament that he intends to introduce legislation to "curb the spread of homosexuality in society" by imprising "heavy penalties" on homosexuals.

Namibian media reported that the Minister also said that, "It is my considered opinion that the so-called gay rights can never qualify as human rights. They are wrongly claimed because it is against true Namibian culture, African culture and religion."

Zambia's vice-president, Lt. General Christon Tembo, recently warned that his government would not tolerate lawlessness, and underlined that members of the newly-formed Lesbians, Gays and Transgender Persons Association risked being prosecuted according to existing laws which prohibit involvement in "unnatural" sex acts, like sodomy or lesbianism.

---S. Predrag

BLACK DRAG PERFORMER SHOT & WOUNDED; COMMUNITY RALLIES

Baltimore, Maryland---Leonard "Lynn" Vines, a well-known drag performer in Baltimore, Maryland, was shot and wounded six times when he went to meet family members in the neighborhood where he grew up. Vines, 31, was planning to look at an apartment when he was confronted by a group of approximately 20 who called him a "drag queen faggot" and told him that "drag queen faggot bitches" weren't allowed in their neighborhood. When Vines told them he was visiting his family, and didn't want any trouble, he was punched in the face and then, while attempting to escape, was shot six times.

Having survived the attack, Vines is confined to a wheelchair and will undergo a long recovery. "I believe that a climate has been created in this country which tells young people like those who attacked Leonard Vines that gays and lesbians are less than human and can be victimized at will. Why is it that gays and lesbians are the only group who are unprotected by our government against vicious crimes like this?" said Anthony McCarthy, a board member of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum (NBLGLF) and a Baltimore resident. A rally was held on Friday, November 6 on the block where Leonard Vines was shot, and was organized by The Vines family, NBLGLF, The Free State Justice Campaign, the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force and the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Baltimore. For more information contact Anthony W. McCarthy (NBLGLF) at (410) 547.9282 or via e-mail at nblglf@aol.com.

PROOF OF TRANSMISSION OF DRUG RESISTANT HIV RAISES NEW HEALTH ISSUES

San Francisco, California---Researcher at the University of California have published the first evidence of the transmission of multi-drug resistant virus from an HIV-positive person to a person previously uninfected. Although the potential for such transmission has long been known, this case report presents the first hard evidence that such transmission of virus resistant to multiple drugs not only can occur but also does. Since the beginning of the protease era, Project Inform, the San Francisco-based HIV/AIDS treatment information and advocacy source, and others have argued this risk was real and that it made careful adherence to therapy regimens and continued safer sexual practices not only personal matters but ones that can have public health consequences.

Even from the first reports of the success of protease inhibitors in suppressing HIV to unprecedented levels, researchers have been concerned with the ability of HIV to develop resistance to this new class of drugs. The fear was raised for two reasons: first, it was clear that it was not overly difficult to develop resistance to protease inhibitors, thus undermining these most potent weapons. Second, it seemed likely that resistant virus would be capable of establishing infection in people exposed to it, who would begin their course of HIV disease already resistant to most or all of available drugs.

In the case reported, a person began suffering classic symptoms of acute HIV infection (fever, night sweats and fatigue) a few days after an unsafe sexual exposure (receptive anal intercourse without a condom, including withdrawal prior to ejaculation). Although the new patient was initially negative for HIV antibodies (as expected, so early on), evidence of infection was established by the more sensitive quantitative p24 antigen test, and subsequently on a quantitative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test. Treatment was begun a few weeks after the patient joined the Options Project, a study of primary HIV infection at the University of California. Unlike 36 other primary infection patients tested there, this patient did not respond to triple drug therapy nor to subsequent change to a second protease inhibitor. Since there was little or no doubt about the initial source of infection, researchers sought out the source patient. Upon contact he volunteered to be studied. Researchers quickly learned he had been failing on the same treatment regimens as the other patient. Furthermore, he acknowledged poor adherence in his use of the treatments. Extensive resistance analysis of the virus present in each patient showed them to have nearly identical strains of virus and nearly all the same mutations and patterns of drug resistance.

Some researchers had hoped that mutated virus might be so crippled by the presence of the many mutations needed to achieve multi-drug resistance that it might not be capable of easily establishing infection in a new person. These data end that theory conclusively. It may still be that multi-drug resistant virus is less fit or less harmful in some undiscovered way, but it is clear that it remains capable of causing new infections.European researchers at the conference in Geneva reported similar cases, and a magazine article described a man in the U.S. who believed he had recently infected his lover with drug resistant virus. Thus, the theoretical concerns voiced about transmission or resistant virus when protease inhibitors first came to market are now proven facts. The need for careful adherence to therapy regimens and the need to pick the most appropriate regimen in the first place is now dramatically emphasized.

Despite these disturbing data, it's important not to stir public panic over the issue. We do not know whether such transmission is or will ever be common. All researchers can say for sure is that it has happened a few times. Undoubtedly, there are more cases that have not been studied or reported, but it would be a mistake to believe that such transmission has become a routine occurrence. It is far too early to define the scope of the public health issues concerned.

What About "Positive to Positive" Transmission?

These cases emphasize the importance of a second related question: whether or not it is possible to transmit drug resistant virus from one HIV-positive person to another. This has become a critical question because many have convinced themselves that sexual precautions are not necessary between two positive partners. Somewhere many people acquired the belief that infection with one strain prevented later infection by a different or mutated strain. There is plenty of evidence to the contrary---the fact that there are many cases of people infected with both HIV1 and HIV2. Other examples include people who harbor both syncitium inducing HIV (SI virus, usually seen in people with advanced stage disease and considered more infectious) and nonsyncitium inducing virus (non-SI virus) at the same time. However, the belief that sexual play need not be safe guarded between infected partners is strongly held by some, for whom this view is perhaps seen as the only "good thing" about being HIV positive. Sadly, this "good thing" very likely is untrue. In light of the new findings from the Options Project proving the transmissibili

ty of multiple mutated HIV, it is critical that research be done to determine whether such drug-resistant virus is also being passed back and forth between infected partners. If so, as most scientists suspect, it will be an emotional blow to those engaged in such practices. But the answer must be known. Researchers are currently discussing potential protocols for ethically testing this concept. The sooner we get an answer, like it or not, the better.

[From Project Inform. For more information, contact the Project Inform National HIV/AIDS Treatment Hotline 800.822.7422.]

12th ANNUAL CONFERENCE PLANS ANNOUNCED BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY LEADERS TO MEET FEB. 11-14

Washington D.C.---The 12th Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference and Institutes are set to convene next year in Atlanta, Georgia from February 11 to February 14, officials announced today.

"Lesbian and gay Black leaders from across the country will meet to discuss the role our community will play in the new millennium," said Willa Taylor, NBLGLF board of directors chair. "I'm particularly excited about the Policy and Empowerment Institute. Not only will participants gain valuable skills and learn more about the new initiatives the Forum is launching, but through small group work, people will end the day with a workable action plan for their home communities." The Policy and Empowerment Institute is designed to build organizational capacity and promote community growth. The Literature Institute gathers writers, literature scholars and readers for an exploration of the Black lesbian and gay tradition. The Health and Wellness Institute concentrates on promoting sound health practices and updates on research and treatment. The final two days of the conference consist of workshops providing education, skills building and personal development.

Early registration deadline is December 15, 1998. Guaranteed registration deadline is January 21, 1999. Cut-off date for hotel reservations in the Westin Atlanta North at Perimeter Mall is January 21. 1999.

For further information, please contact Conference Coordinator Kenyatta Dorey Graves at 202-483-6786, by email at ForumConf@aol.com

The National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum is the only national organization dedicated to empowering the nation's 2.5 million black lesbians and gays. Founded in 1988, the Forum has thousands of members nationwide.

KICK BACK!

Detroit, Michigan---Kick, the Detroit-based magazine for homosexual men and women of color, will resume its publishing schedule with the Holiday 1998 issue.

Founded in 1994 by Curtis Lipscomb, Kick magazine, a vital voice for

(continued on page 35)

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Brother 2 Brother and the AIDS Prevention Team are programs of the National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum and are funded in part by the County of Los Angeles Office of AIDS Programs and Policy, corporate and private donors and your generous support.

HATE-CRIMES! WHO GIVES A DAMN? WHO?

by Cleo Manago

A few week ago, while in New York City gleaning over the New York Times, I noticed a front-page article entitled "Killing Shakes Complacency Of The Gay Rights Movement." The article covered a local demonstration staged in reaction to the killing of Matt Sheppard - a 21 year old, gay [White] college student from Wyoming. An estimated 5000 people, predominately White lesbians and gays, rallied, marching through major thoroughfares, paralyzing the city's streets. Concurrently, similar events took place across the nation. Vigils and even "funerals" were held to honor young Sheppard. The article's title "Killing Shakes Complacency....." referenced that previous to the Sheppard incident the gay [White] community had become relatively complacent, seemingly content with its political and social accomplishments. Since the height of AIDS and gay rights activism of the eighties, in recent years few protests or public demonstrations have been organized.

As I read about the [White] gay/lesbian community's swell of reaction to Matt Sheppard - who has since become the poster child for hate-crimes in America - and complacency and "success" in that community, I acknowledged my strong reaction to this report and how it marginalized the lives and experiences of people like me, who are same-gender-loving (SGL), bisexual or gay/lesbian identified Black Americans. Every year of my life Blacks, regardless of gender and sexuality, have experienced murderous hate-crimes executed by White civilians and law enforcement. Violence also occurs in the community as a result of Black-on-Black contempt for Black life, but that is not the focus of this writing. Acknowledgement of it is important - these are also hate-crimes generated from the fabric of America's brutally racist legacy. During the New York City rally [White] gay/lesbian protesters displayed pictures of past victims of hate-crimes, the majority of whom were Black and Latino. Yet, the issue of hate-crimes against "gays" did not reach prominence until one person died who was prototypical of most at the rally - Matt Shepphard - a White, homosexual male.

Though I also found Sheppard's killing disturbing, after coming upon monthly if not weekly reports of murders and brutal assaults toward Blacks resulting from "hate-crimes," I refused to be swept away with reaction and grief by Sheppard's high-profiled tragic death. I could not emotionally afford to utilize my great capacity to care about a murdered young man, White, who died at the hands of hate. Though Matt's face filled the media landscape and my thoughts, I provided little psychic room for him because I am still in mourning over Black bodies that have piled up over recent years, months and days previous to Shepphard. I am still enduring that it appeared few cared about James Byrd - dragged to death; Sherrice Iverson - strangled to death and raped at 7 years old; Garnett Johnson - beheaded, burned alive; Antwan Sedwick, 20 years old -suspected to have been hung by two White policemen who noticed him celebrating the OJ Simpson verdict; Dante Evans 13 and his 14 year old cousin who were shot to death while playing "because they were niggers," all killed by Whites for being Black, and the list goes on and on.

There was no national rallying or extended media attention for ANY of these victims. But, more tragically than that, not many of us were around either. Yes, this is America, a country espousing to be the super power of the "free" world, but so many of its Black citizens, in this context its homosexual/bisexual Black citizens, are still politically, economically and psychologically in deep bondage. Still too disoriented to care enough about each other, to demand respect, self-determination and a quality or long life.

Regardless of my forthright critique of [White] gay/lesbian racism, them not showing up to protest murder by hate-crime of Blacks, especially, Asians, Native-Americans or Latinos and prioritizing themselves is not my primary concern. My concern is how Blacks are still complacent in the wake of tragedy that effects us so severely. Though it is the epitome of White insensitivity, racism and arrogance for [White] gays/lesbians to make Matt Sheppard an icon of hate crimes, without being straight-up about that they prioritize the lives of Whites, I admire what White skin privilege and White power legacy inheritance in America has provided them. They have the courage to fight back, they have the clarity to say "No More", they are organized enough to stop traffic in Midtown Manhattan because one of "theirs" has died. As a result of their feelings of human (and white) entitlement they enjoy great political, economic and psychological success and gain the time and space to be complacent. Yes, though the White gay community is despised and discriminated against, they still benefit from the fact that they are White in a White biased culture. I am sure their audacity is rooted in what I call White entitlement consciousness (the belief that they are completely entitled to own what the world offers), but the capacity to have entitlement consciousness is within our grasp as Black people as well. But accompanying this consciousness must be vigilance, Black love, Black SGL love, the capacity to love one's self as Black and as part of a legacy. As we have all heard, yearly Blacks spend hundreds of billions of dollars, but we typically lack the consciousness to invest in our selves, legacy, empowerment and community - as a people. Having this capacity is key to the [White] gay/lesbian community's success, political power and vigilance.

Sure, it is heartbreaking to learn that a young person, Sheppard, was brutally attacked and left hung on a fence to die. Still, admittedly, I, like many in the Black community am still reeling from the endless battery of cruel, gruesome and brutal death of Blacks on a grand scale by hate-crime murders. I like most Americans did not know Matt Sheppard. I do not assume he gave a damn about the life and deaths of people not White (I also do not assume otherwise). But, if I use the [White] gay/lesbian community's attitudes and behavior toward Black life in general as a gauge to judge attitudes possibly held by Matt I would be a fool to marginalize for Matt my on-going grief perpetually sustained by the horrific (even more horrific than Matt's) deaths of Black people.

It is important to realize that the source of our struggles, disorientation and apparent inability to trust, love and build-up one another successfully as a people/community is rooted in that we are still severely impacted by internalized oppression, institutionalized delusions of White supremacy, White racist thinking and White cultural biases in this country and media. Though it is humiliating to admit, and painful to face, the legacy of slavery is still with many of us, so much so, it appears we do not even know anymore when we are being disrespected. Premature, gruesome, and senseless death has been a regular part of Black life for centuries. We have learned to passively attempt to pray problems away, while other communities actively say "No More" using tactics born from the blood of our more politically active past. Our tendency to endure has fostered a culture of complacency occurring in the wake of mass death, dysfunction and

assault on Black people. The Million Man March, a celebration of life and culture, and acknowledgment of the spiritual dearth and psychic conditions Black males endure, a movement galvanized and activated by us, as a result, significantly reduced Black on Black violent crime, in particular gang violence in our midst. As powerful as this was it seems many are still too distracted to understand the power of self-reliance, self-respect and self-love. We do have the power to change things, but if a people do not understand why regardless of their intentions they keep winding up back at square one, they will continue their vicious cycle. Understanding why we do what we do is important. Recognizing and challenging when being disrespected is important, like the [White] gay/lesbian community did regarding Matt Sheppard, activity which was taught to them by our ancestors during the Black Power and civil rights movements - before invention of the jheri curl, the hair wave and a whitened Michael Jackson. It ain't too late for us.

Imperative to our success is acknowledging that institutionally we are oppressed, and to challenge this by being collaboratively and individually vigilant against oppression and not normalizing and tolerating it. We once had this spirit. The [White] gay/lesbian community has it now. When the New York Times mentioned a legacy of activism among gays and lesbians that became successful enough to create complacency, they were really talking about homosexual Whites. The [White] gay/lesbian movement is not a movement on behalf of Black homosexuals and bisexuals. We need to stop denying this and gain the self-respect to build our own movement that resonates with our legacy, struggle and culture. Black homosexuals and bisexuals face a growing suicide rate, failed organizational efforts on a national and local level, monthly publications that die every year and a lingering HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the midst of all this, little has been created to support and affirm Black SGL, bisexual and gay/lesbian identified youth. Still, many Black, Latino and Asian homosexuals, hungry for sexual acceptance somewhere, some who in addition to the conflict of being homosexual in Euro-Christianized communities of color, also contend with internalized oppression, believing they have no choice but to endure racist sexual exploitation and marginalization to attain gay [White] pride.

We are better than this Sisters and Brothers. Many of us are finally growing to see gay/lesbian and White homosexuals as synonymous, while searching for more culturally, inclusive and affirming means to claim ourselves - thus the term same-gender-loving (SGL) and the growing same-gender-loving (SGL) movement. Among us are people who realize, through the Matt Sheppard incident and before, that the primary and possibly the only benefactors of the gay rights movement are White homosexuals. Before there was "Gay pride" there was Black Pride, our ancestors taught America civil disobedience and social change activism. The White gay community relearned because of Shephard's death, the struggle is not over, and in acknowledging that the [White] lesbian/gay community was in the streets. Yes, we should take time to have fun, celebrate ourselves and shop, but, still, the body count indicates our struggle was never over. When we begin rebuilding ourselves in our own image, reclaiming our self-respect and vigilance, and of most importance unlearn our internalized oppression and begin to recognize it in ourselves and lovingly assist each other in working through it, we will then gain the clarity needed to effectively resist oppression, build sustaining support and political systems that will squelch the mass numbers of Black death across sexuality that still occur in America.

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SKIN DEEP:

THE HUMAN COST OF PHYSICAL IDOLATRY

by Jean Pierre Campbell

Chicago---When a girlfriend suggested that I take a closer look at my "nasty little porn habit," I thought it was a good idea not because I thought my "addiction" was unhealthy, as she thought (after all, it's safer than the park) but because I wanted to know what, if anything, might be learned about black gay sexuality. Here's what I found...

The way the brothers kissed looked less like commercial porn and more like an art film. It had to do with the nonverbal intensity of the moment, the passion conveyed with a kiss between men, a rarity in porn because brothers never kiss each other with such openness. Their hands roamed each other's bodies with surprising tenderness, more an example of the way men touch when they enjoy being together rather than when paid to fuck.

As the dark brother sat naked, his legs open wide, on a couch covered with a bed sheet, the tenderoni kneeled between them with an erotic slowness as if preparing for a sacred rite.

Though the scene had the makings of first rate porn, I was left unaffected because these brothers weren't the stuff fantasies are made of. I wanted gorgeous brothers like the ones on TV who slam-dunk for a living, or one of those flawless models from the pages of **Black Inches**---you know, the ones who look meaty enough to eat.

Unfortunately the brothers in the film, with few exceptions, looked commendably ordinary---ordinary bodies, ordinary faces. Left unsatisfied, I took back the video in search of something better.

Making my way back to the gay adult video section, I was confronted by a great wall of male flesh. As I scrutinized the phallic mosaic, I noticed an abundant array of fabulous white male bodies, which prompted me to consider what white gay writers like Patrick Giles were saying about white gay culture when I made a fascinating discovery.

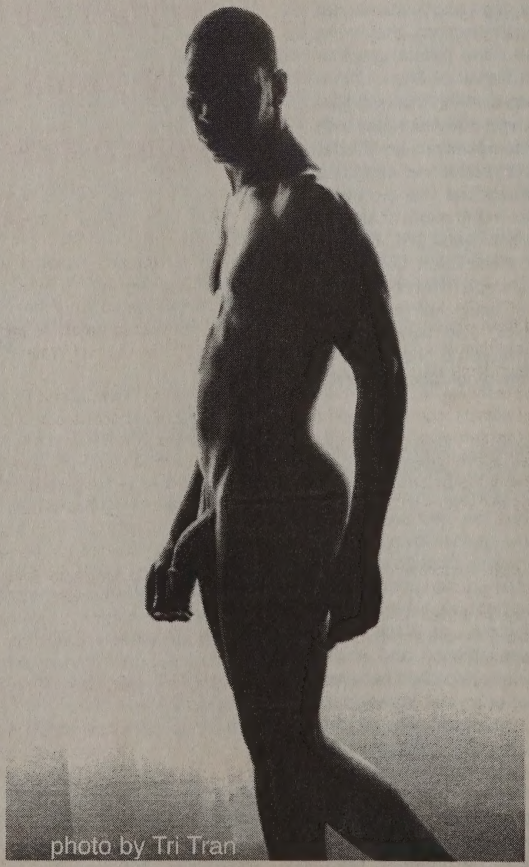
photo by Tri Tran

In his essay "Better Dead Than Ugly" (Windy City Times, July 10, 1997), Giles exposes a (white) gay culture consumed by an impossible, superficial physical ideal. Using famed gay photographer Tom Bianchi's book **In Defense of Beauty**, a celebrated collection of white male nudes, he cites the (white) gay male standard of physical perfection: powerfully muscular, frequently tanned men. Not surprisingly, the white males on hundreds of film covers I examined were, indeed, "Bianchi men."

By contrast, the black films were composed of brothers who were physically fit as well as unfit, chiseled and unchiseled. Clearly the market wasn't demanding. In fact, I had the sense the prerequisite for black film seemed to be based more on sheer courage than looks.

Giles doesn't provide any insight on male beauty in a black gay context, but he does show how the "Bianchi aesthetic" exerts a harmful impact on gay culture. One incident really underscores how a world view which privileges the "body beautiful" above all else can pervert the human personality: "'Why weren't you at Paolo's party,' I (Giles himself) heard one Bianchi ask another. 'We took a blanket to Central Park to hear Pavarotti,' he replied, whereupon the first gasped. 'That fat thing?!"

At 6' 3 1/2", 325 lbs., Giles writes candidly about the pain of gay rejection he receives on a daily basis for being "that Fat thing!," the antithesis of white gay male beauty. In the end he concludes, "Ugliness in the gay community is not a misfortune, but an offense."

Giles' critique forces recognition of the human cost involved with physical idolatry. Thus I became aware that black gay porn is psychologically healthy in an important way. It places less emphasis on a physical ideal, opting instead for a more expansive representation of the black body: thin to thick, muscular and nonmuscular, endowed and unendowed. In fact, watching black gay porn has been instrumental in helping to democratize my erotic imagination. Although I admit that flawless brothers are still an incredible turn-on, I now watch men (and porn) with a heightened consciousness, because my erotic imagination is more encompassing and less superficially-driven.

LAZARUS NOT LEVITICUS

A DAY OF WHOLENESS AND WELLNESS

by Aubrey McCoy

People who work in the health care profession do not need to be reminded of the words of Emma Lazarus: give me your tired, your poor, your weary. Every group of dedicated professionals upholds a duty that at times borders on sacrifice. Among health care professionals the duty is always heavy, and in times of crisis it can become an unbearable weight. In the last several weeks I have spent more time around health care professionals than I remember ever having done in the past. I have helped draft a proposal for a program to monitor prostate cancer among African-American men, and in the process, met some singularly wonderful individuals committed to meeting the challenges of the health care crisis that is silently devastating our African-American community. These individuals are frustrated by the need to accomplish miracles in a time of indifference and neglect by government---and a time of extraordinary complacency within our own community towards our health. Loretta Jones, a lady who has been a health care advocate for over thirty years, sat in my living room and threw up her hands, "People don't know what's going on."

There are few among us not guilty of getting so caught up in the demands of living that we stop paying attention to the things that help us stay alive both individually and collectively. In my case, it was not always like this. I hesitate to tell people about a certain part of my past because they will not believe it. Unless we see the actual ravages of addiction or any other physical ailment, we usually discount the meaning of recovery and/or rehabilitation and all that it takes to make a person well. It is hard to simply imagine the degree of ruin a person may experience when he or she is in poor health, whether that poor health is self-inflicted or just something that happens. My physical reality was once very different from what it is today. "I knew you before your color changed," an old friend reminded me last week. The ravages of alcoholism effected my body in every way imaginable including bouts of alcohol poisoning and the inevitable delirium tremors. And they affected my spirit. Once in a while I will pull out a pack of pictures that I use to frighten myself when I think I might ever want another drink or another cigarette of any kind or that I may want to experiment with the fashionable poison of the hour. I am lucky: unlike many I have a reference for wellness which is a constant memory of illness.

When I began to recover, I underwent an experience that I have never been able to describe. Taken as a whole, it was the greatest time of my life. I became conscious of the fact that I could walk and breathe in a way I did not remember from before and that has not revisited me since. As I got healthier and felt more in tune with my body, I began to take health care issue more seriously. I started studying nutrition and wellness; I hung out at health food stores, health product conventions, volunteered at an acupuncture clinic on Skid Row, and changed the direction of my life and the focus of my interests. I had the leisure of a long recovery---the only vacation time I have ever taken in my life---and used it wisely. I have not been vigilant as necessary as the years have gone by at keeping a healthy regimen, but the lessons I learned when I availed myself of those wiser than I have not left me. The questions and answers about staying well are with me still.

The irony of my life in this post-recovery period is that people who have seen my progress and know of my health care interests have turned to me for answers about their health concerns as the years have whittled away at their wellness. I tell them I am a poet not a doctor, but they still come for advice. The little part of me that has survived like Lazarus struggles for answers to give. More often than not I can only emphasize vigilance and if that is not enough---if the hour is too late ("If you had been here my brother wouldn't have died") I can only counsel faith.

In our African-American community, in all quarters, the hour is terribly late. In fact, it is too late for anything but faith.

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The Unity Fellowship Church Movement had its yearly national convocation during the week of October 4th through the 10th here in Los Angeles. I am not a member of that church although for all intents and purposes one may call me a "fellow-traveler." The Unity Church Movement has a message and ideology that move in an ever increasing positive direction. The church under the aegis of Bishop Carl Bean has adopted a social program based loosely on liberation theology, and it has become an extremely meaningful institution in an ever-widening community. The week before the convocation I was typing out a list that a friend was taking to the church to point out how the sanctuary needed to be spruced up before the convocation. It would have been wonderful to have been able to attend each day's events. The themes explored at the convocation were intriguing and ground-breaking among issues tackled by what is now called the faith community, our churches. I could not attend most of the week's events but was fortunate to participate in as much as I could of the Day of Wholeness and Wellness that capped the convocation.

The Day of Wholeness and Wellness was a health exposition and as such it featured seminars and lectures and vendors and anyone concerned enough to set up a booth or table to offer some public instruction about health care issues affecting our community. The kickoff to the event was to have been a keynote address by Representative Maxine Waters (D-California), but the representative was mired down in a Congressional budget battle and had to remain in Washington. In her place, Reverent Alfreda Laniox (who will be the pastor of Unity Fellowship Church Los Angeles starting in January) spoke with great passion and fervor about her [the pastor's] conviction that health care must become a devotion. Reverend Freda pulled no punches: we must do something, she said, not only to stop the AIDS crisis, but also to adopt stringent preventative measures in all areas of health care. (See the interview that follows.) To paraphrase Reverend Freda, African-Americans are the least healthy of all the peoples of this land, and at the rate we are going, we are already among those human communities threatened with extinction in the early part of the next century.

Among the speakers and awards presenters at the kickoff for the Day of Wholeness and Wellness was a young woman from California State Assemblyman Kevin Murray's office who turned a rather profunctory chore into one of those moments of unexpected revelation that stays with one. *(continued on page 21)*

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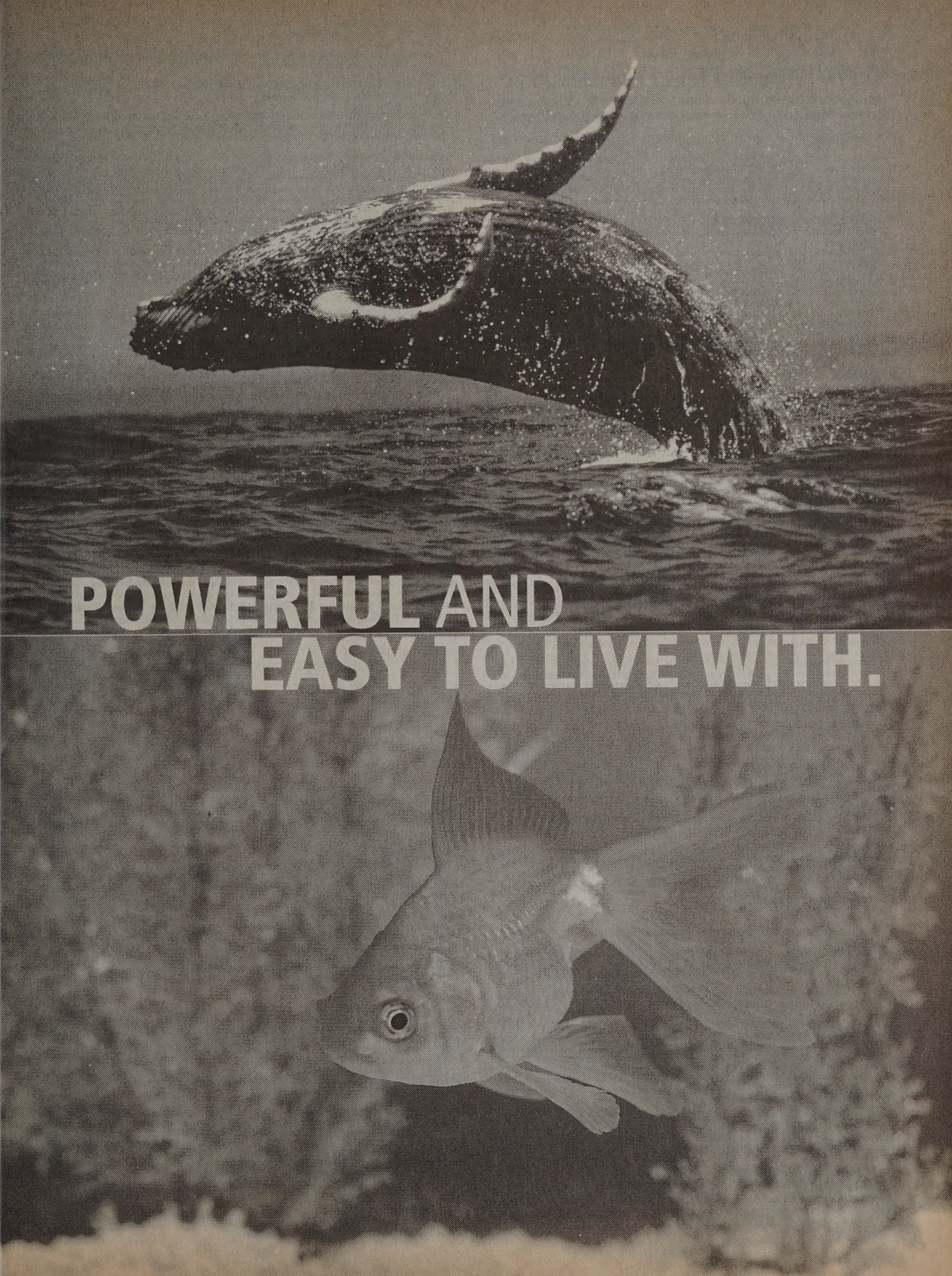
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VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

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If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:

- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute,® Cardioquin,® Quinidex,® and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

  Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

  This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

  These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

  If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

- Viramune® (nevirapine)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

  VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

- Crixivan® (indinavir)

  The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

  The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight Kg	Body Weight Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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(continued from page 17)

Turning from prepared remarks, the young lady recounted how she had nearly died in an automobile accident a few years ago. She told a story of rehabilitation that was a story of resurrection. "I was the woman. I was there." Her remarks showed the compassion and understanding of a real survivor, a lady Lazarus spreading a message of hope to an audience that included many persons suffering grave physical ailments.

California State Assemblymen Roderick Wright took to the rostrum after this young lady. He limped slightly as he made his way across the podium. Having seen Assemblyman Wright around town over the years, I noted that he had put on weight and had aged. In the course of his remarks he said he had been battling prostate cancer. Anyone hearing the rousing little speech he gave, and understanding the significance, would wish him a successful recovery and a very long life. Wright is the only politician I have ever heard who lays bare the hypocrisy that provided the intellectual and scriptural underpinnings of homophobia. Wright's remarks, perhaps because of his recent illness, were heartfelt and personal. His message rose to a level of inspiration that was appropriate for a day like the one he urged us to celebrate. "Preach, preach," he was urged by his audience. And preach he did. He took on the Book of Leviticus and the irrational thought and behavior that rely on that particular late addition to the Bible. Like the young lady from Kevin Murray's office, Wright connected his own brush with death to a humble understanding of life and health. He gave resonance to the story of Lazarus as he shunned a literal interpretation of injunctions found in Leviticus.

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When I think of life, our human term upon this earth, I always look to the story of Lazarus for inspiration. Lazarus' great good to the ages is that he lived in human form after death. With the help of divine intervention, he reinvented himself. I and many others (such as the legislative aid and the assemblyman) who enjoy a new lease on life have tried to do the same. And as someone who cares about how we manage to take care of our physical health, I wonder how Lazarus cared for his health after he was restored to life. It is one of those stories that the Bible leaves us simply to imply.

A person who is, as we used to say, "in the life," needs to do everything he or she can to keep and increase the value of his or her own life. The brute reality of any phobia is that it is corrosive, it eats at the soul. Others' fears of who we are eat at our souls. Body and mind, flesh and spirit, work together, and the internalization of homophobia by same gender loving people does an extraordinary amount of damage. The one thing we can do for ourselves is to keep physically and mentally healthy. It is an agenda that challenges us because our own guilt at who we are has allowed a current of self-destruction to run through our community. Much too often we prey upon each other rather than pray together, and we are too often indifferent to each others' pain.

Healing begins with helping and a hand. We teach by example; we learn by what we teach. Like with all things that pertain to our lives in America, we must find the alternatives that help us survive. When we fall ill, unless we do it for ourselves, no one else will give meaning to those words of Emma Lazarus---give me your tired, your hungry, your poor huddled masses. Lamentation and outrage are not enough to stave a crisis. The real work of survival is in preventing disease, decay and destruction before they set in. But if illness has already set in, we would do well to endlessly study the story of Lazarus, where the only rule we are forced to observe is that of resurrection.

"HERE IS THE BEGINNING"

The Interview with Reverend Alfreda Laniox of Unity Fellowship Church

Aubrey McCoy: The overriding theme of the Unity Fellowship Movement's recent convocation was Justice in society. Do you see health care as a social justice issue?

Reverend Alfreda Laniox: Yes I do. Because health care is not accessible to everyone equally. Until that happens, it is a social justice issue.

You are one of the Chief Operating Officers of the Minority AIDS Project. Can you give us a brief history of the agency?

The Minority AIDS Project (MAP) is the first community-based HIV/AIDS organization established and managed by people of color in the United States. It was founded in 1985 by Bishop Carl Bean and members of the Unity Fellowship Church. MAP's services and educational programs are community-wide and available to all people. However, from the beginning, the primary focus of its services and outreach has been the African-American and Latino communities in Central and South Central Los Angeles. When Bishop Bean and a handful of volunteers opened MAP's doors, they began the agency's work providing AIDS-related services to 15 people. Today, MAP employs over 50 full-time, part-time, and subcontracted bilingual staff handling a caseload which has grown to 1,200.

How has the work of the church with the Minority AIDS Project changed since 1985?

I've been involved in the work of the church with MAP since 1989. Map was the first social justice outreach from the church--now the scope has broadened tremendously. Along with MAP, we now have Youth and Young Adult Outreach Ministry, Street L.I.F.E. Outreach Ministry, All-Fellowship Recovery Ministry, Spiritual Counseling, and Womyn's Social Justice Ministries.

What are the obvious battle before us in terms of support and funding?

In terms of support and funding, it is a battle. The funding for AIDS has been cut. We were at the bottom of the totem pole when it was popular to fund AIDS issues. Now that America is declaring that AIDS is no longer in the top ten, the communities of color are the hardest hit. Since it has been reported that the numbers of new infections have gone down dramatically, the dollars are much harder to come by. While it's true the numbers of new infections in the gay white communities are down, the numbers of new infections are devastating the African-American and Latino communities. Getting our own people of color to step up to bat and not give the responsibility away is part of the battle.

As the pastor of an African American congregation deeply involved

"I believe a lot of people are under the impression that when they do the "AIDS Walk" or the "AIDS Bicycle Ride" that the money is equally distributed to all AIDS organizations. We don't see any of those dollars. Most corporations feel that they've already given because they've supported those major events. It's amazing that 15 years later so many people are in the dark about the funding that we don't receive in the black community. That's why it's so important that we educate the community---that we don't get money from the celebrities and big corporations that should support us."

with the issues surrounding the AIDS crisis, have you found that other African American churches have simply not responded to the AIDS pandemic? If so, why has the faith community been so lax?

Yes. What we're finding out is that they refuse to deal with sexuality and there is also a refusal to look at the new issues anew. They continue to try to look at it as a gay disease although women of color are 56% of all new reported infections.

How do you and others directly involved in the faith community hope to engage more African American congregations and faith groups to become actively and consciously involved in the fight against AIDS?

By continuing to step out and give information and facts regarding this dreadful disease---to take away the fear and keep awareness up front; knock at their doors, keeping our voice out there---personally meeting with Black business leaders, going door-to-door, church-to-church.

Reverend Freda, you are a minister and an advocate for wellness and wholeness with an emphasis on dealing with the problems of HIV infected persons. I suppose that you have to call on all of the spiritual reserves you are taught in your life as a minister to deal with this role.

In order to continue in this battle, I do have to do things that keep me spiritually in tune. I do have contact with the God that continues to give me the strength to make this journey.

Has your faith been tested by the scope of the AIDS epidemic and the way it has been allowed to progress in the African American community?

No. I believe that Unity Fellowship Church was created for this purpose---for times like these. The purpose of our church is to give us the strength for battles like these.

Several years ago I worked in a law office where the emphasis of the practice was on bad faith litigation. Most of our clients were AIDS patients fighting their insurance companies to get the full benefits allowed by their coverage. I'd speak with clients one week who were trying to get their insurance benefits and I'd call back the next week to find they had passed away. It was one of the most stressful things I have ever done. On a day to day basis, how do you cope with your work as an advocate for a community that faces such extraordinary challenges, both physical and spiritual, of life and living, and death and dying?

As I said, I, too, must do my spiritual work and go within and connect---go into silence within the peace, joy, healing. If we accepted who we are, our journey, that God is in all and that in God there is no dying---life simply continues---that is my strength each day.

Can you tell us how the Day of Wholeness and Wellness came about?

Bishop Bean was called into a meeting in Congress with Congressperson Maxine Waters. They were in the process of trying to declare a state of emergency within the Black community. Out of that meeting, the "National Day of Wholeness and Wellness" was born. It was created simply to bring awareness to the communities of color of the desperate situation that has been silently evolving. Spirit spoke to me and said we needed a day set aside to make people aware of the devastation that was occurring around us---to wake the community up to the seriousness of this pandemic spread of AIDS and that entire families of color are being wiped out.

I was struck by all of the comments that you made. I was particular-

"Wholeness has to do with not just the body, but also the spirit, soul, and mind. Whatever route you decide to take, it is most important that one is mentally ready to accept that they're ok---it's not a punishment from God."

ly struck by what you said about how hard it is to get the support of corporations that are directly involved in the African American community. Could you give us more insight?

There are many worthwhile issues that the major corporations do support. I believe a lot of people are under the impression that when they do the "AIDS Walk" or the "AIDS Bicycle Ride" that the money is equally distributed to all AIDS organizations. We don't see any of those dollars. Most corporations feel that they've already given because they've supported those major events. It's amazing that 15 years later so many people are in the dark about the funding that we don't receive in the black community. That's why it's so important that we educate the community---that we don't get money from the celebrities and big corporations that should support us.

You have a particular passion for empowering African American women and women of color regarding the HIV virus.

"When you educate a man, you educate an individual. When you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

The numbers that have recently been released by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, citing a rise in the HIV infection rate among African American women, are alarming. Without meaning to sound naive, how is it that almost two decades into the nightmare, African American women have become the one group with the largest exponential rise in cases of new HIV infection?

Because of the way the disease was introduced. Women felt they were safe. It was a gay, male disease. Women have always been the caretakers. While taking care of others, they didn't have the information that this disease would affect and infect them.

Reverend Freda, I have heard you speak passionately of prevention in the fight to halt the spread of HIV infection.

Prevention is very important. We as a race of people have not been much into prevention---our culture went to the doctor once we were sick---our parents didn't have the money to take us for checkups. When growing up we went to the dentist when we had a toothache---that mentality has hurt our people. We must change that thinking and become proactive instead of reactive.

How do you believe substance abuse figures into the equation of prevention?

I do believe substance abuse plays a major part in risky behavior. That's why it's important that we have substance abuse programs and facilities---that why we [at MAP] have our Safeworks program where we exchange clean needles for dirty ones. We believe that if we're out there, once people feel safe with us, they then come to us to come off of drugs and the purpose of that is to save lives---once someone's life has been saved, they will seek our assistance to change their lifestyle.

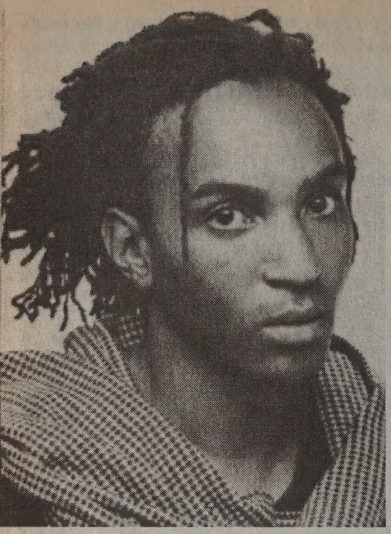
Rev. Alfreda Laniox
photo by Alan Bell

I know you are a minister and not a medical doctor. But you have a special awareness of health care issues in our community. How do you see the place of alternative therapies such as acupuncture?

I'm open to all forms of treatment. There are many, many things that one can do to become healthy. They can be done in many different combinations. I feel that there is no one way to combat this dreadful disease. What works for one may not work for another. Wholeness has to do with not just the body, but also the spirit, soul, and mind. Whatever route you decide to take, it is most important that one is mentally ready to accept that they're ok---it's not a punishment from God. If the mind is whole, wellness will occur, no matter what stage your body may be in.

If you had one wish that we should do one thing as a people to better safeguard our health, what would that be? And where do we go from here?

A wish? My wish would be that we would all go beyond our personal prejudices, our own personal issues, our own conditional love, to be able to come together as one body in love. And where do we go from here? Well, here is the beginning. As Harriet Tubman said, "I freed thousands of slaves. I could have freed thousands more, if they had known they were slaves."



BLACK PRIDE IN

by Rodney McCoy

From July 30th to August 2nd, an estimated 5,000 people gathered as New York City held its first ever Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration.

With a nod to the other cities across the country that hold their own Black Lesbian and Gay Pride celebrations---Washington D.C., Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit, Phoenix, Chicago, Philadelphia, Oakland and Cleveland--- the New York Pride committee looked for something that would make its first celebration unique and memorable.

"There is a background we have in New York of fostering the cultural community and bringing it to the forefront, making talent visible and available. Culture would be the meat," said **Kim Ford**, Executive Director of African Ancestral Lesbians United for Societal Change (AALUSC), one of the sponsoring contributors of the event. " The other just-as-important piece was to bring different aspects of the community together in one project. You have activist support groups [as well as] party promoters. These are really big pieces of the Black Lesbian and Gay Community mosaic here in New York that don't usually work together. I think this is what's historical."

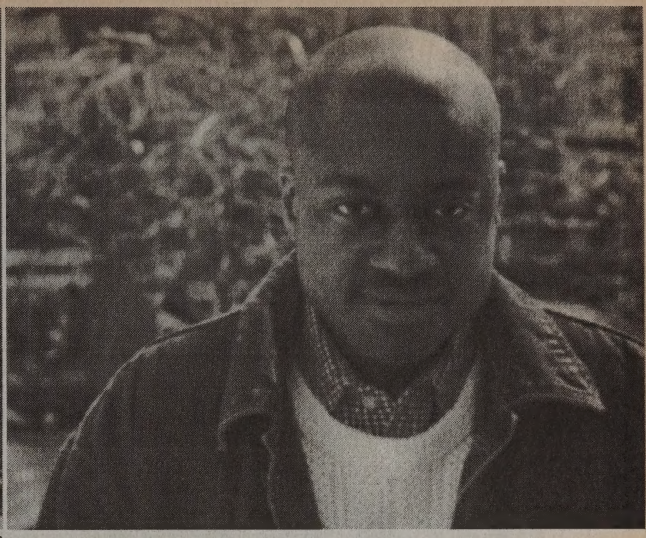
Kicking off the weekend was The Opening Forum and Pride Reception, held at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. Representing the New York City Department of Health's Men of Color AIDS Prevention Program and the Black Pride organizing committee, I was the moderator. The theme of the evening was "Why Black Pride?" Giving some reflection were **Candice Boyce**, founder of AALUSC; **Sheila Towell**, Director of Community Education and Organizing at the Audre Lorde Project; **Eric Flavors**, board member of In The Life Atlanta, that city's Black Pride committee; **Courtney Williams** and **Earl Fowlkes,** Washington D.C. activist both known for their work on the D.C. Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee; **James Saunder**, founder of U-Men Entertainment; and **Kevin McGruder**, Executive Director of Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD).

"There's a whole idea across the country that New York has every thing and New York has done everything, [but] we take what we hav for granted," stated McGruder. "For us, the other impetus is the fac that there are other cities that have strong Black Prides going on an they really look to New York and wonder why aren't we doing it Some of the pressure came from the outside as well as from th inside. In terms of the Black community in New York, there are still lot of things that aren't happening [such as] visibility and involvemer and consultation on major issues in the gay community. Part of tha is because people don't realize our numbers."

"I don't know how much actual discussion takes place during th Pride weekend to find out where people are and where they hav been and how far we have to go in terms of being emotionally an physically healthy," added **G. Winston James**, Executive Director c Other Countries. "There are issues of race that do not get dealt with and though the spaces exist for Black gays and lesbians to convers amongst one another, it's rare that a forum is created for us to socia ize and communicate together. This weekend is going to be that time It's very important that we do this."

Following the forum and reception, many of us headed uptown fo the Harlem Mixer at the Lennox Lounge, one of many partie planned for the Pride Weekend. Rarely do affairs such as this featur the co-mingling of men and women, so it's very co-gender natur made it a standout event. It was also special because the usual in club age barrier fell as well. The "elders" were hanging tough wit the "youngster" whether the music was classic house or current hip hop. It reminded me of the tales from older Black New York lesbian and gay men who, back in the day, did not go downtown to form the spaces, but stayed in the 'hood and partied together as family.

Friday was the Cultural Celebration, a mini-concert at the Harlem



THE BIG APPLE

Photos by Chip Williford

School of the Arts, featuring some of the city's finest Black same gender loving performing artist. Hosted by **Chaz Crowder** of U-Men Entertainment and emceed by comedians **Sharon Williams** and **Mark Fowler**, the program opened with a wonderful libation to the ancestors by **Reverend Dana Ross,** accompanied by the powerful drumming of **Panama.**

I wanted to say that the highlight of the evening was the fierce dance company **Ronald K. Brown/Evidence**. They turned the audience out with "Better Days", an erotically charged four-man tribute to the club of the same name, choreographed to the music of Double Exposure's "My Love Is Free". However, the **Unity Fellowship NYC Gospel Choir** gave the evening a powerful and spiritual uplift with "I've Got a Testimony" and "The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation". The latter was especially memorable as the director, **Dionne Freeney**, put the choir through the paces with her spontaneous and spirited directing. And one cannot forget the soulful blues of **Suhir Blackeagle**, one of New York's rising music divas.

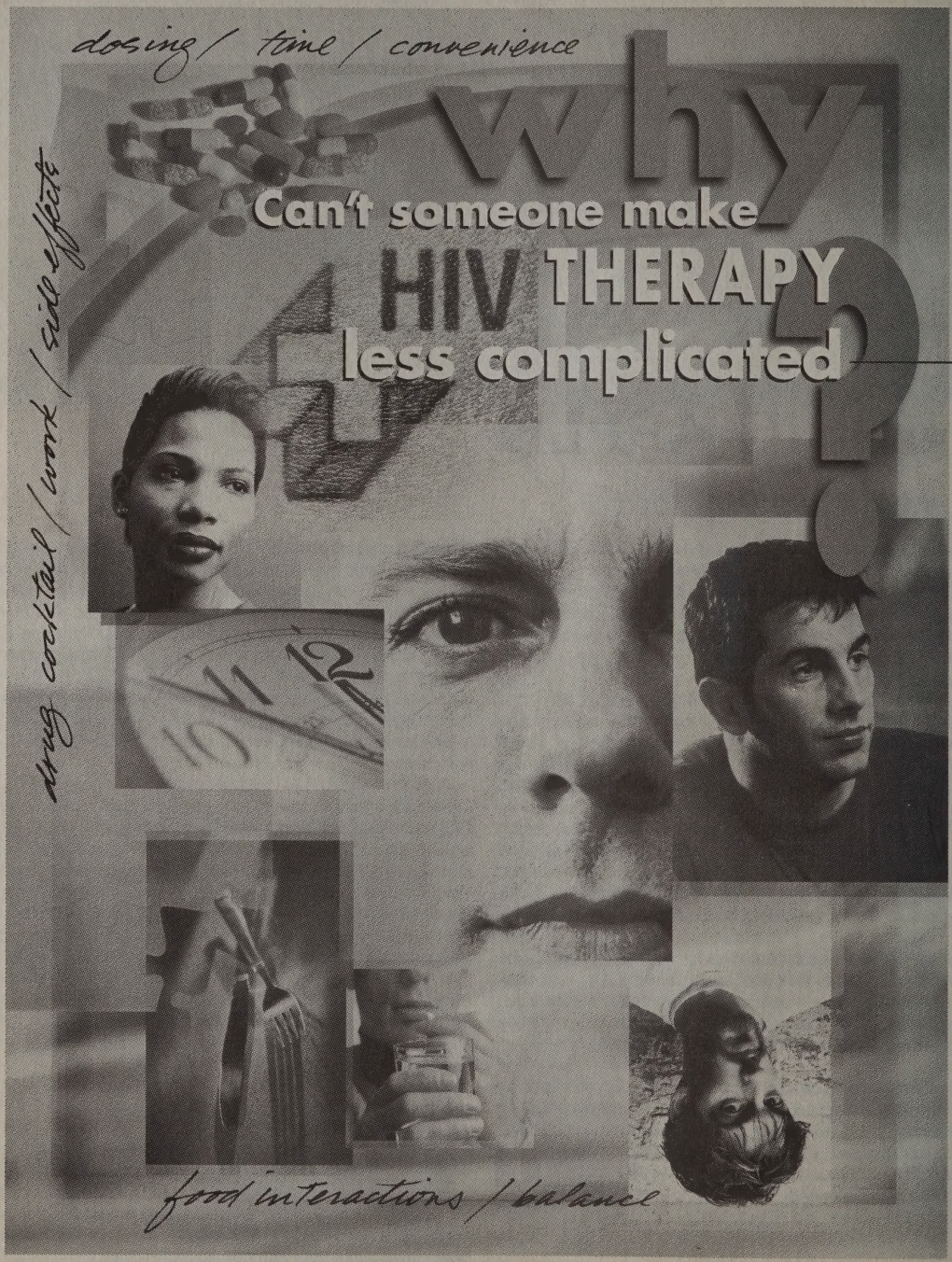
Poetry was well represented by the work of **Jahma Sentwell** who gave the audience much to think about with "Nommo Mr. Nice Gay" (a blistering attack on the homophobia of many Black Nationalists) and "Freaky Deaky Dawg" (an erotic piece that gives new meaning to "hot dog between warm buns on a cold winter night").

Rounding out the evening was the sassy and sexy numbers by award winning cabaret troupe **The PAC** (Performance Arts Chorale), under the direction of **Ms. Miche' Braden. Lisa McCain** brought the house down with "Bubbles", the lounge singer whose rendition of "Let Me Entertain You" was too much even for herself---you had to be there---while **Bobby Berry, Adi Cummings** and Mark Fowler had the audience on their feet with their medley of "girl group" performances.

Afterwards the boys rushed to the Octagon, a two-story dance club boasting classic house on the first floor and hip-hop and reggae on the second, where James Saunders and U-Men Entertainment hosted the official Men's Party. The place was packed with men ranging from cute to PHYNE in various states of dress, and the music was FLAWLESS. Though I did not attend the Official Women's Party, which happened the same night at The Warehouse in the Bronx, the sisters tell me it was quite a time. Nothing desirable could be said for the facilities management, yet the crowd had a good time, especially with the entertainment from D.C.'s bad girl **Oohzie** and **Onyx** from New Jersey.

It was all about Brooklyn Saturday morning as the Audre Lorde Project hosted the Community Workshops and Forums. Featured workshops included: Intergenerational Communication, The Role of Media in Educational Outreach Work, Building Healthy Relationships: A Model for Gay and Bisexual Men, Changing the Face of Political Activism, African-American Experience in the Criminal Justice System, Seniors in the Lesbian and Gay Community, Women's Health Issues, Gay and Lesbian Finance/Investing, and Black Lesbian and Gay Literature and Publishing. I also co-presented with **Donald Powell** of Gay Men of African Descent a workshop on Eroticizing Safer Sex which took on a refreshingly different dynamic with the attendance of women to this workshop originally designed only for men.

Yet the highlight by most accounts was the Community Picnic and Vendor Marketplace, held at Fort Greene Park in downtown Brooklyn (home to many of "the children"). Various vendors, including various community-based AIDS service organizations and the delicious food from the Pride Committee's **Keisha Bell** (you go, girl!) contributed to the feeling of family that permeated this packed event. I go back to family because no where was this feeling more evident than at this picnic. In fact the more appropriate phrase might be "family reunion",


dosing / time / convenience
drug cocktail / work / side effects
why
Can't someone make
HIV THERAPY
less complicated
?
food interactions / balance

someone just did!

Once Daily

SUSTIVA™

efavirenz

New SUSTIVA™ is the first HIV drug approved to be taken once-a-day as part of your combination therapy. Just take three 200 mg capsules together once daily, with or without food; high fat meals should be avoided. Your doctor may suggest taking SUSTIVA at bedtime to reduce any side effects you may experience.

SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

New For HIV

Finally, a once daily medication to treat HIV.

SUSTIVA. It's about time.

www.sustiva.com

*NNRTI - non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor.

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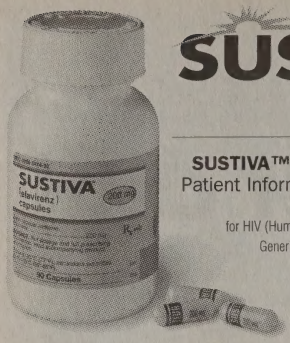

Once Daily

SUSTIVA™

efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA*

(sus-TEE-vah)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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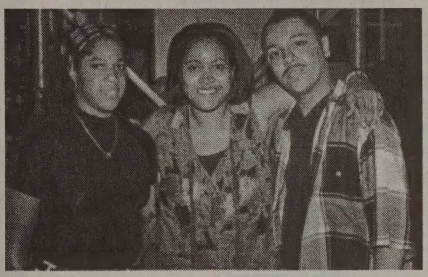
DuPont Pharmaceuticals
Wilmington, DE 19880
Issued September, 1998

as many of us ran into friends we had not seen in quite some time.

"Any celebration which is called a Pride celebration is incomplete if it does not provide a forum for the artists of the community," G. Winston James once said to me, so it was only fitting that he hosted the Black Pride Book Signing and Reading, also held at Brooklyn's Audre Lorde Project. This year's special guests were poets Pamela Sneed (author of "Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery"), **Cheryl Boyce Taylor** ('Raw Hair"), **James Earl Hardy** ('B-Boy Blues", "If Only For One Night") and O. Henry shot story award-winner **Thomas Glave** ("The Final Inning").

I remember the raw energy of **Pamela Sneed's** one-woman show a few years ago, and it was thrilling to see the same energy and commitment to honesty she brings to her poetry. Glave sobered the mood with his tributes to his mentors, **Toni Morrison** and **Essex Hemphill**. He then read from the final passage of Morrison's novel Jazz, emphasizing the Nobel Laureate's pleas for the recognition and achievement of intimacy, which Glave asserts as a metaphor of the Black lesbian and gay experience. As I listened to Morrison's words, my boyfriend caressed my head and shoulders while a sister sitting across from us weaved her fingers into the hands of her lover. It was as if Morrison's wish came true. I felt hopeful that these moments of open affection would become more commonplace in our lifetime.



Glave also read his tribute to Essex Hemphill, which sparkled with the late poet's own words. Hearing Essex warn all of us to be vigilant against all forms of racism and challenging Black gay men on our sexism, I had an answer to a question that had stuck in my mind all weekend: 'What makes Black Gay Pride so different from mainstream (read: White Gay) Pride?' Whereas white gay men and lesbians have the luxury of focusing on sexuality, Black gay men and lesbians automatically bring issues of race and culture to the discussion of their homosexuality. So often we feel we have to sacrifice one for the other, yet we bring the most power to our selves and our work when we embrace and address all of whom we are. A perfect example was Cheryl Boyce Taylor's reading of her poetry. Boyce Taylor's strength was her personal reflections of love and family, especially when told in the patois of her native Trinidad. She also entranced the audience with her recreations of the histories of Black lesbian and gay men during the civil war, which was written in response to the stories she heard from their white counterparts during a recent cultural festival.

James Earl Hardy brought characters to life as he read passages from "B-Boy Blues", "Second Time Around" and "If Only For One Night". Speaking through his most popular characters---**Mitchell Crawford** and **Raheim Rivers**---Hardy vividly expressed his own joy at the existence of Black Pride, the necessity of Black Pride being a separate entity from mainstream Pride celebrations, and (like Hemphill) calling for all of us to honor Black women, especially our mothers.

"The weather was fab!" "Muscles, bulges, nipples, asses, flesh everywhere you looked!" "There were competing boom boxes!" "I was surprised at the number of couples at the beach...and those trying to get coupled!" "Really nice turnout!" "The beach was PACKED!" "You should've seen all the boys trying to outbuff each other!" "The atmosphere was very warm, very enjoyable." "There wasn't anything planned, but it was more of a do-your-own-thing event, and it was all right." "The girls, the boys, the children! I LOVED it!"

Although I did not attend, these were just a few of the comments made about that beautiful Sunday morning that found most of us at Riis Beach in Queens for the Black Pride Beach Party.

But some of us traded sun worshiping for another type of worship. Simultaneously across town, Unity Fellowship Church held its regular Sunday worship service in Brooklyn. I realized that being in church was important for me as a Black gay man. This is an important part of my Pride celebration. I can claim my space in the universe and be one with my God, that the peace and joy and fellowship that has traditionally come from the Black church is now available to me.

Closing out the Black Pride NYC '98 celebration Sunday night was not one, not two, but THREE official parties. For the ladies (and I understand there were a few fellas there as well) there was the Networking Party sponsored by Colours Magazine. Held at the Palm Court in downtown Brooklyn, it was an excellent turnout. The people who sang, including **Cheryl and Company**, a female vocal group from New Jersey, were phenomenal. **Sanoma** of Personal Personals (a woman's dating service) provided the spoken word, including a poem written for and inspired by Cheryl-Ann' ass. I am not making this up! **Jazmina,** director of Cheryl and Company, dazzled the crowd with her solo turn. Vocalists **Danny, Julia** and **Deborah** and drag-king extraordinaire **Dred** blew the audience away with their performances. The evening's host was **Jane Gavit Lewis,** a comedian who kept the audience in stitches.

The Unity Party at the Manhattan club Speed, co-hosted by James Saunders and party promoter **Charles Jackson** (of Sound Factory Bar fame), drew the usual crowd of hot boys looking for a hot night of hot music.

Yet the biggest surprise was the Blue Lights in the Basement party held at Rockwell's, the newest Black Gay and Lesbian after-hours spot (and one club to hit in Brooklyn!) Now there was some concern that Rockwell's had not gotten its liquor license at the time of the party. It was also apparent as the evening wore on that this would not be the classic type of "blue light" party our parents talked about. Still, you know what? It did not matter. Thanks to an eclectic mix of 70's, 80's and 90's classic dance tunes from **DJ Derrick,** nobody cared about the alcohol. It was all about the music, tearing up the dance floor, hanging out with friends, and just enjoying. I had to leave around midnight when the brothers and sisters were STILL pouring through the door.

Overall, it was an outstanding weekend, affording a good and meaningful time for all. The Pride Committee knew it had done well when the elders of the community said they were impressed with what was done. Having been blessed in this way, we're definitely looking forward to Black Pride NYC '99. Hope to see you there!

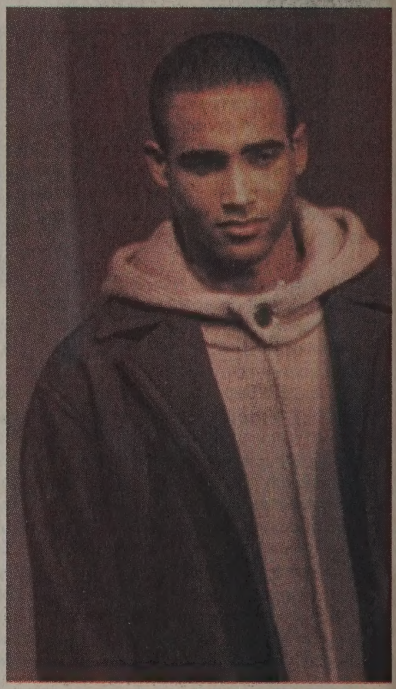
in Fashion.

by Erik Aston

Wazzup with urban fashion? EXSTO XXIV VII is the premiere collection of contemporary men's sportswear from BET Design Studio. That's right! Black Entertainment Television has entered the fray of hip-hop fashion.

Representing an important evolution in/on the urban scene, Exsto goes beyond a predictable definition with a broader outlook that enhances personal style and taste in the face of a logo-driven market. Targeting that all important 18-34 cash-bro consumer who has outgrown the need for clothes that scream "look at me", Exsto recognizes it's boy trade as confident enough to take itself seriously without having to look like it's baby brother. This new sense of freedom is self-evident in the unique blend of fabric selection that throws a contemporary spin on Exsto's ghetto-fabulous interpretation of collegiate, outdoor and workwear.

Check out the overalls and carpenter jeans, cut from a Donegal-flecked tweed. Note the boiled wool that adds a unique texture to Exsto's classic anti-classic hooded sweatshirt, enhancing the material with a bold fashion-forward color sense. Check out the cool indigo blues and warm tobacco browns daringly thrown akiltered by vivid accents of pumpkin, goldenrod, berry and orange caviar, rendered simply and loose-fitting with an unexaggerated ease.

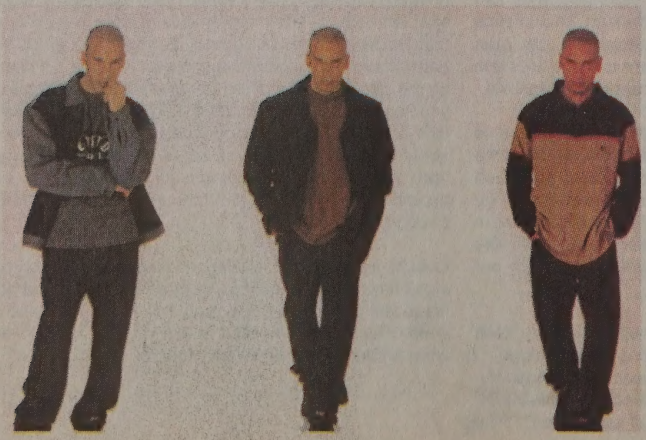


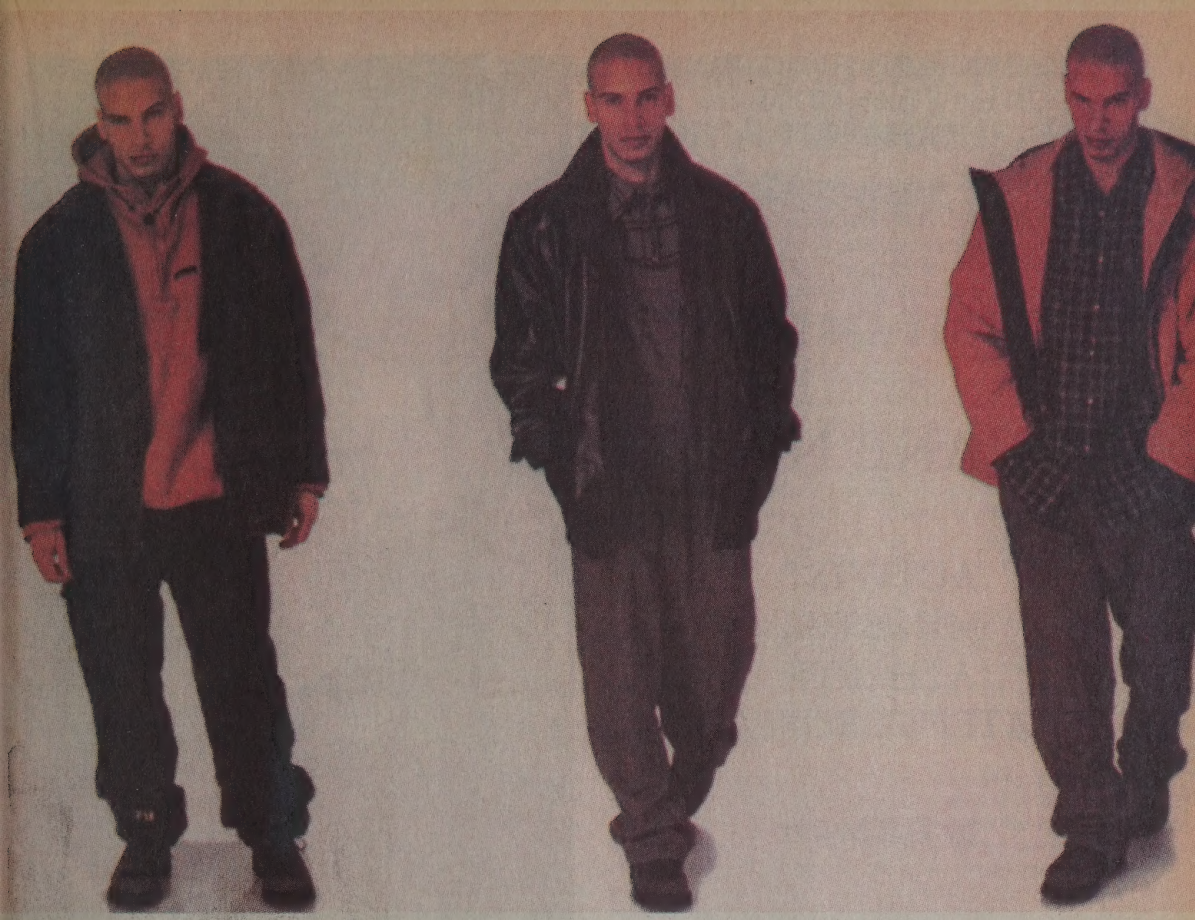
Exsto price tags range from $68-$130 for sweaters; $44-$65 for knit and woven tops; $50-$68 for denims; and $99-$350 for outerwear.

For the Fall '98 collection Exsto's take is self-evidenced in four themed deliveries:

INNER CITY BLUES

This bad-ass blues-based group of casual sportswear puts a major imprint on active and collegiate.





LIVING FOR THE CITY

Military-inspired, it's sleek, paired down and high performance in execution. You throw it on and claim the look you want. Pure bottom-line top.

EVERYDAY PEOPLE

A contemporary fashion tale with directional pieces in 'feel good' terracotta, olive and forever khaki. Cargo pockets are important and respected here, not only---as expected---in the canvas pant, but also on the sleeve of an ultra-soft brushed 1x1 cotton rib mock top.

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Expect the unexpected twist on ruggedware here where orange, rust bark and loden are the shades de jour while the "Yo Sam" carpenter pant in spice-toned tweeds and the "Sierra Hoody", with drawstring hem and logo patches, scream your name.

UMUNTU NGUMUNTU MGABANTUN
'oo-MOON-too n-goon-MOON-too n-gah-BAHN-too"

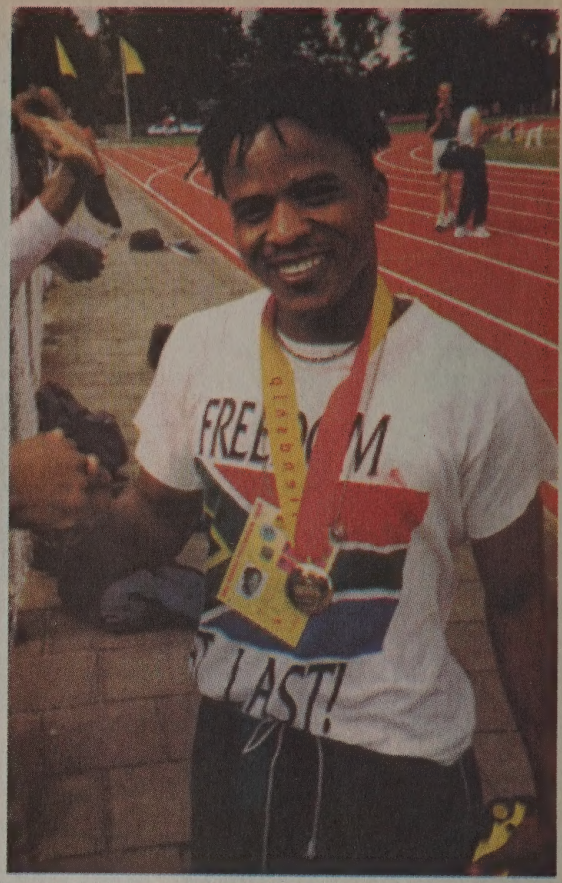
"I Am What I Am Because of Others"

SOUTH AFRICA'S

BONGANE NYATHI

ACTIVIST
MINISTER
ATHLETE
GRATEFUL BUFFALO

by G.B.Mann



In the 1980s Soweto became a household name like Viet Nam, like Mississippi, like Watts. Via television, we bore witness to "man's inhumanity to man." We sat rapt, our eyes fixated on the boob tube as the well-armed enforcers of Apartheid attempted to break the fighting spirit of black South Africans. "The idiot box" made us aware of another branch of our family tree.

Chased by police, clouds of dust billowed up around the running legs of school children. Children that could be our cousins. We squinted at blurred faces, trying to attach names to faces attached to uniform-clad bodies attached to rock-throwing hands. Children running and chanting fearlessly defiant in the face of genocidal hate.

As with the assassinations of the Panthers, King, and Malcolm, we mourned at the funerals of martyrs. Apartheid, the uglier cousin of America's Jim Crow was now a familiar face. Yet (with the exception of a few "stars") the tele-vision kept The People at bay. The lens never got close enough for us to KNOW any one of the people.

As is often the "major" media's practice when covering dark-skinned people, images of stampeding and gathered hordes were bounced by satellite around the planet like so much cattle. But know that there is one in our midst, a native son of Soweto, who gives substance, humanity and voice to those seen through aberrant lenses; dust obscured, nameless faces.

Bongane Nyathi was one of the tens of thousands of children who spat in the face of Apartheid shouting "Amandla!" (Power!) "Awetho" (To the people) like a delayed echo of our struggle in the 1960s.
Bongane, pronounced "bone-GAH-nay." "You swallow the N," he says, instructing. It means "Grateful." Nyathi, "knee YAH-thi" means "Buffalo." The Grateful Buffalo. His name is fitting in many ways. Nyathi himself points out that he, like the buffalo, has a strong upper body tapering into a small waist supported by strong legs. But his buffed torso is not what is noticed about him first. It is his eyes. Eyes, almost black, peering out from the dark of him; eyes which seem fixed on some distant finish line. Yet one gets the feeling that he has already crossed and is running with the victor's tape flailing in the wind across his chest.

Activist. Minister. Friend. Storyteller. Athlete. Son. Brother. Leader. Uncle. Lover. Some readers may remember him as that fine copper-toned shorty in the fluorescent green-yellow thong and gleaming white cowry shell necklace; a competitor in the hard body contest at the 10th annual beach party at Point Dume in Malibu, California. His beauty finds its origin in the soul.

Born and reared in Soweto, South Africa, Bongane is currently a Divinity student at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California; a part of the Graduate Theology Union. He calls his collective experience the "pencil sharpener" that has molded him.

"Nyathi earned three medals in the 1998 International Gay Games in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, this past Summer."

My first impression of him was peripheral, but lasting. It was at Oakland's first black gay pride celebration at Laney College. He was bright and popular with a smile that made the sun peek out from behind the clouds. When I looked for him later, he was nowhere to be seen. I assumed he was gone, having had to rush home to his white lover. He figured the same about me. So much for prejudgments.

In September, I had the good fortune of spending a Fall weekend in Berkeley among his community of friends. My lasting impression of him is that his purpose seems to always be before his eyes...

While dancing with him and his prince of a partner, Michael, at the White Horse, a bar in Berkeley, there was a certain restraint and focused detachment in Bongane's choreography. That is not to say that the brother can't dance, but that there is a self-consciousness in his every move. He is aware of the flip and flop of each of the short dreads which crown his head. There is that "something" undefinable in him that artists try to help us to glimpse on canvas; writers often refer to as "something just behind the eyes." That something inside so strong that one South African composer sings of it. An "urging of ancestry" is the only way I can sum it up.

Bongane says that he feels selfish being away from the people who made him who he is today, ever pointing out that his mother has "sacrificed so much" for him to study in America. After graduating, he plans to return home to work in his community out of a sense of duty and to demonstrate his appreciation. But unlike many "been-tos" ("been to America") , as many Africans educated in the United States are called, he is not expected to come back rolling in a Mercedes with a shower of expensive gifts. It is his mere presence which will bring pride to the people that made him. These people gave him that "something"-which placed him atop the highest podium this Summer as his country's national anthem swelled in his ears and heart at the 1998 International Gay Games in Amsterdam.

Nyathi originally went to be a part of the storytelling festival component, but, being athletic, he registered to compete. He won 3 medals. The same hands which threw rocks at the police won a Gold medal tossing the Javelin. Running with the Dutch team in the 100 Meter, he won a Silver medal with a record of 12 seconds. The feet which ran for life on dusty Soweto streets won a Gold medal in the 4x4 as a member of the US New York Team.

Several times during my visit, Bongane spoke passionately of his desire to somehow link continental Africans and Africans worldwide. Personally speaking, his partner is African American, but his politics extend well beyond the bedroom. His love for the community is made real through the many involvements he maintains with community organizations. He also appreciates the enormous financial wealth that African Americans possess. A resource yet to be enlisted in the uplift of Africans everywhere.

****

My mind's eye still pictures him sitting in the pulpit of McGee Baptist, humble yet proud. The depth of his understanding of the value of, and his respect for, the black church as an institution was "all over him" in his posture, in his facial expressions, and in his reverent conduct. The sight was nearly frightening. A rare and marvelous visitation, a blessing from one of our kinfolk from the Motherland.

Nyathi offered introductory words before the lifting of the tithes and offering at a Sunday morning worship service at McGee Baptist Church in Berkeley where he interns. You know that little sermonette which attempts to extol the virtue of giving ten percent; but more often succeeds in making one defensive and guilt-tripped? It's the little rebuke that puts the pomp in the prance of tithers headed for the collection plate, envelope in white-gloved hand.

In contrast, Nyathi's words were brief (no more than three minutes) but powerful in concept and imagery. His message gave insight into his gift in synthesizing the heart and the mind.

Carefully choosing each word---partly because he is still mastering English---but more so because he is acutely aware of, and respects.

"According to Nyathi's knowledge of his history, there was a time when what we call homosexuality co-existed without contradiction among a myriad of cultural and social expressions in some societies. Homophobia (among other weapons), he says, came with the missionaries."

"He sees the shortcoming of traditional churches as going to certain limits; the limit of tolerance. But tolerance, says Bongane, is not what is needed. 'Acceptance is what is needed. Tolerance says that there are places that one cannot go' based on the fickle feelings of another; it presupposes a superior and an inferior. 'Acceptance takes one as one is, whereas tolerance hopes that one will change.'"

the power of words, Bongane delivered what I dubbed "The Parable of the Pipes." In this improvised parable, he likened the Spirit of God and our worship traditions to water, saying that water itself is free, "abundant like the ocean." The church, he continued, is "like a pipe," the conduit which delivers to us the spirit through worship traditions (water). He further pointed out that "the pipes are not free," but need maintenance to continue to bring the water. Hence, the need to financially support the church. The congregation approved with a warm "Amen." This parable could indeed be extended to many of our institutions.

The Ministry was Nyathi's from birth. His mother, having named him Bongane, was asked by the white doctor what this child's Christian name would be. "Cecil" was the name she chose; the name of an uncle who was in seminary at the moment of Bongane's entrance into the world.

Nyathi bases his ministry upon a principle called "Ubuntu" which translates as "humanity." Bishop Desmond Tutu is spreading the gospel of this concept, one which Nyathi assures was in place before European colonizers spoiled African culture by defining variations in language, traditions and thoughts into "differences" which were then utilized to separate people. The oldest trick in the book. Divide and conquer. According to Nyathi's knowledge of his history, there was a time when what we call homosexuality co-existed without contradiction among a myriad of cultural and social expressions in some societies. Homophobia (among other weapons), he says, came with the missionaries.

Ubuntu includes the concept of "unconditional inclusiveness." He sees the shortcoming of traditional churches as going to certain limits; the limit of tolerance. But tolerance, says Bongane, is not what is needed. "Acceptance is what is needed. Tolerance says that there are places that one cannot go" based on the fickle feelings of another; it presupposes a superior and an inferior. "Acceptance takes one as one is, whereas tolerance hopes that one will change."

A born leader, it was this lack of acceptance which motivated Nyathi

"He is particularly interested in being guardian of the liberal sexual orientation clause in the new South African Constitution which allows same sex marriage...According to Nyathi, sexual orientation is now being used as a political wedge, and the clause is under attack by bigoted South Africans with the backing of the American Christian Right."

to start South Africa's first gay church for people of color. It began with 3 people in his living room. At it's height, the congregation boasted hundreds of members. The work continues in his absence.

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A cup of tea ("from South Africa") warms in my hands. We sit in the kitchen of the cozy, book and art filled home of one of his professors. Steam rising before his face, Bongane relates a story about black South Africans which closely parallels an event that was a critical turning point in the lives of black people in America, one that further links our struggles for humanity. A fight.

This fight was in the boxing ring. The 1970s. John Tate, a black American boxer versus a white South African boxer whose name was pummeled from Bongane's memory along with his bloody face. In much the same way that African Americans leaned ear-first into radios in the 1950s when Joe Louis fought Max Schmelling, Black South Africans huddled around television sets to watch John Tate. National patriotism was replaced by racial solidarity. Pan-Africanism. Black South Africans cheered with every blow that Tate landed until his arms were raised high, not in surrender, but in victory. Further shattered was the symbol of white skin as the mantle of an unbeatable opponent. Black Americans became even more synonymous with freedom and black potential. Perhaps this was the nascence of Nyathi's admiration for and feeling of kinship towards African Americans.

****

His path is clear; to work in the South African government, to continue the struggle. He is particularly interested in being guardian of the liberal sexual orientation clause in the new South African Constitution which allows same sex marriage with all of the privileges of dual citizenship for foreign spouses and domestic partnership benefits. He feels that the clause's preservation strengthens others. According to Nyathi, sexual orientation is now being used as a political wedge, and the clause is under attack by bigoted South Africans with the backing of the American Christian Right. He plans to "use the master's tools (law and legislation) to dismantle the master's house."

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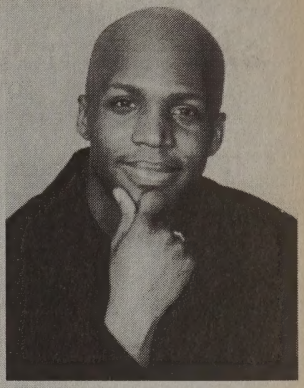
We stand at "the front of the line," the culmination of millennia, of the coming together of men and women, many of them nameless to us. In a real sense, we are the highest evolution of those infinite couplings. While we are at the front, we are also the "end of the line." Many same gender loving people will have no human progeny, and so our offspring are often spiritual babies and brain children. Our legacy is in a life well-lived and in those lives that we touch affirmatively.

Bongane is grateful to the brothers and sisters in America whose demonstrations, divestiture campaigns, prayers and thoughts furthered the cause of freedom and justice for all South Africans. He invites us to also take pride in the outcome of the new South Africa and its Constitution. His life's aim, as he sums it up, is "to convey the love of ancestors who left it for us to share brother to brother and sister to sister."

Bongane Nyathi inspires. He is a study in the evolution of a human life, an example of how we might all live a life more courageous, victorious and purposeful. If he is who he is because of others, then we are all the greater for knowing him.

the under represented mid-Western homosexual of color, took a brief hiatus for critical reorganization. "I have experienced much satisfaction in doing my job of recognizing the best of our entire community," says Lipscomb. "The joy has also brought great pain in areas where I have faced difficult challenges. I tell you now that I have faced and met those challenges, and I would like to again experience the joy of providing a service to the brothers and sisters I love."



Lipscomb is the recipient of The Michigan Gay and Lesbian Community's 1995 Rising Star Award, SBC Magazine's 1995-96 Brother of the Year Award, and the Billionaire Boys' Club 1998 Spirit Award.

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THE AIDS PREVENTION TEAM GETS NEW MANAGEMENT

Los Angeles, California---The National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum recently announced the change of management for it's Los Angeles-based AIDS Prevention Team. Christopher Smith, who has been with the project since January as Prevention Director, has been appointed Program Director.

"We are very excited to have Christopher take the reins at APT," said Willa Taylor, chair of the NBLGLF Board. "He has incredible vision and foresight in combination with solid management skills. He will take APT into the future and help it become one of the nation's preeminent health programs for the African-American gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community." Smith was formerly at the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention.

Other additions to the staff of APT include Bruce Eddins and Lenore Rivers. Bruce, a graduate of California State University, holds a Master's degree in Behavior Science. Lenore Rivers returns after a one year absence from the APT staff. As a treatment advocate, Lenore will work to bridge the gaps in access to treatments, complementary therapies, and adherence to strict medical regimens.

Chaz Lanier assumes administrative responsibilities as Deputy Program Director and Rene Miranda continues as Office Manager.

"We still have a few positions to fill," continued Smith. The goal of the reformed AIDS Prevention Team is to develop national models for health promotion and community development for African American lesbians and gay men. For more information on the programs and services offered the community, contact AIDS Prevention Team at 323.964.7820.

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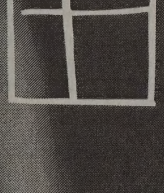
Project Open Window is a confidential interview study designed to learn more about people who have been infected with HIV for less than one year.



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TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK

...AND HOMOSEXUAL

by Stanley Bennett Clay

The world is always changing because a new set of young people spring forward to rightfully re-define, re-shape and re-think society, forcing the old dogs of the world to learn new tricks. As the world itself is in constant motion, so is the heart, mind and soul of society, for stagnation would kill society as truly as all would be obliterated if the earth ceased to spin on it's axis.

There is birth, there is life and there is death. Everything on God's good earth shows us that. It is the system of things. And it is all good. We do our sweet time on this planet, make the very best of it, leave some good vibes behind, then move on to the next scene. And the fertile ground we cultivate and, ultimately, leave behind, is as much responsible for the fresh new birth because of our seeding and care. It is indeed the charge of the older generation to nurture youth for the good of us all, for the good of the world.

One of the most baffling statements I've ever heard is "youth is wasted on the young". Such a begrudement belies the fact that it is the very innocence, the naivete', if you will, of youth that allows them to boldly and brazenly charge the future with an 'I can do anything!' gusto that too often and unfortunately dissolves with age into a sea of cynicism and disillusionment.

Growing older instead of bolder, becoming weary of the world instead of ever appreciative of its endless wonders, learning new defenses and new prejudices and new restrictions with each new birthday has caused some of us old heads to mistake repression for responsibility, maudlin for maturity, and persnickety for propriety, putting us at odds with the future.

I emphasize 'some of us'. Many of us baby boomers-plus, having known and recalled the sheer joy of turning the world upside down, inside out and better than it was before we came along, appreciate cultural, social and political revolution. Today's youth, wearing their baggy pants halfway down their asses, pumping rap and hip hop at a velocity far beyond our tolerance and creating a language that is completely theirs which will become as standard and iconoclastic as ours once was, and creating industry on their own no-hand-out terms, keep the ball rolling.

God bless our young. The very idea of trying to get 'The Man' to give them a job is as ludicrous as Vanilla Ice. These young turks create their own shit. The new music and video industry exist not be liege of white corporate America, but because these straight outta Compton-straight outta Brooklyn-straight outta Baldwin Hills, Harvard and Howard geniuses know what they have and offer corporate America investment opportunities instead of slave labor. They may be the first African American generation that completely understands the concept of they're worth, knowing what it's worth and taking nothing less; the first African American generation to fully understand the international law of economic trade. Nation to nation. Negotiations. Supply and demand.

Self-sufficiency.

The new Oprahs and John Johnsons and Maxine Waters and Tom Bradleys and Babyfaces and CJ Walkers and Jewel Thais-Williamses are perched at the starting gate, ready to win the race, not just run it, win it! It's a race that all can win if you're smart enough, fast enough, proud enough, good enough.

Sure there are a lot of young people who don't know if they are. For that matter, there are a lot of old people who still don't know. But there are a lot of young people who recognize that they are smart enough, fast enough, proud enough, and good enough to keep the world spinning, spinning in the bright, gleaming image of their unwasted youth.

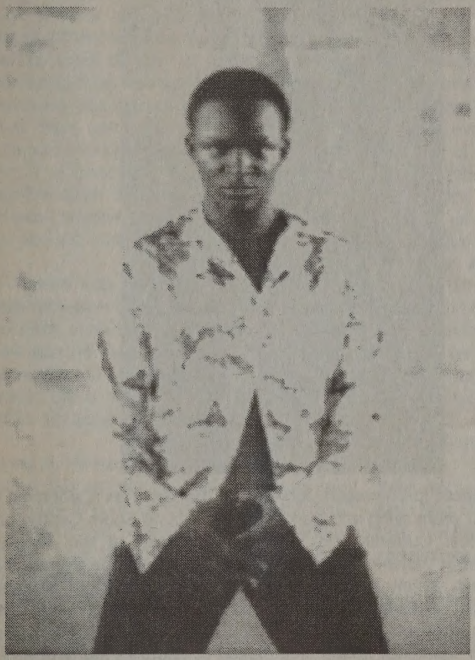
The four individuals that have been chosen for profiling here---production coordinator Nahshon Anderson, personnel director Michelle M. Packnett, spousal abuse healthcare worker and computer assist manager Juamonta Roberts, and celebrity make-up artist/photographer/stylist and journalist Tory are all under the age of 21, all self-proclaimed Africentrics, all openly and proudly same gender loving, and all accomplished in their chosen fields.

I invite you to meet them, to know them, and to know that they are but a tiny representation of so many young, gifted, black and same gender loving people out there ready to claim the world on their own amgnificent terms!

"I went home to Sacramento and I came out. It was very liberating, like being reborn. I can take on the world now."

His name is Tory. Simply Tory. And at the tender age of 21 this handsome model-quality writer/photographer and make-up-artist-to-the-stars is not only creating an industry buzz as the crown prince of hip-hop glam, but is taking care of personal business by living his life as a proud and open Africentric homosexual."

"I told pretty much everybody I saw. It took so much weight off of me. Actually everybody was really cool about it, you know, basically, they already knew. It was just something that---I don't know---everybody was in denial about, so they pretty much---after the first initial 'well what made you decide to be like that? How long have you been feeling this way---after we got past all of that, everybody just said 'well we basically knew blah, blah, blah, but it's alright with me. I still love you the same.' It was so cool.



TORY, 21
CELEBRITY MAKE-UP ARTIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Everybody was very supportive.

"Being out has really affected me as a person because now it's just so much easier for me to say what I feel to people and be completely honest and open with myself as well as everybody else, and it's just made me so much more confident. I mean, I've always been open in my professional life. Since moving to L.A. I've been open to everybody I've met, but now I just feel like I'm naked, I'm totally exposed for all the world to see, and I like it!"

In a little over a year, Tory has borrowed from the glitter and the glam of such legendary divas as Diana Ross and Diahann Carroll to create a contemporary classicism for today's generation. Aside from creating the make-up for Janet Jackson's European tour and her HBO poster, Tory has worked his magic on such stars as Brandy, Vivica A. Fox, Yo-Yo, Foxy Brown, Queen Latifah and Destiny's Child, to name a few. His signature work has appeared on the covers and in the pages of Harpers Bazaar, Ebony, URB and Teen People, while such projects as The Soul Train Awards, The Image Awards, The Lady of Soul Awards, The Keenan Ivory Wayans Show, this year's AIDS Project L.A. fundraiser and Sheryl Lee Ralph's prestigious annual charity function, Divas Simply Singing, have all benefited from Tory's touch.

"I started off doing beauty photography in high school," states the young artist in his casually unassuming way, "and the make-up for my photographic subjects was just the next natural step for me.

"For me, it's about the face, and from the face it's all about the eyes. The true beauty of a woman is all in the eyes. If you look at all the old films you can see it; the haunting, the hypnotics, the magic. My goal is to celebrate it, enhance it, without getting in the way of it. The eyes should simply be."

Tory does not plan to merely celebrate the beauty of the women he adorns with the rouge and grease paint and mascara of his kit. No, this ambitious young man looks to expand his artistic horizons by producing and directing projects that will celebrate hip-hop glamour like it's never been celebrated before. "I love the music of my generation. I love being a part of it. And I want the beautiful women of the culture to shine on the outside with the beauty they express from within. Great talent should always be packaged well."

Although soft spoken, almost to the point of shyness, Tory came to Hollywood with every intention of taking the entertainment industry by storm and so far he seems to being a pretty good job of it:

"When I first stepped off the bus in Hollywood, even though it was a ghetto and I was stepping over people sleeping on the sidewalks, in my eyes I still saw it as the glamorous Hollywood that it used to be. I knew that I had arrived.

"I first came to Hollywood to observe; to figure out who all the major players were. I made a hit list of people I wanted to work with, and, basically, after that, I put my plan into motion. I have about 20 on my list. I've knocked off about 4."

And how does this young renaissance man face the challenges of his youth, his enthicity, his sexual nature in a world that has yet to be fully accepting of any of them?

"Actually, I never looked at them as challenges. I always looked at them as advantages, because they've always been things that were issues for me previously, but at the same time, they made me strive that much harder, and it also made me aware that I would always have to work harder at everything in order to have anybody pay attention or take a chance on me."

Too busy to really concentrate on a relationship ("even though I'm definitely looking"), Tory plans to one day set his make-up brush aside and parley his already in-demand photographic gift into a career as a motion picture and video director. "By the time I'm 25 I see myself living in New York and directing, or maybe I'll be a spokesmodel for Revlon," he laughs good-naturedly. "By the time I'm 30 I want to be traveling around the world and just chillin'."

But in the meantime his masterful make-up on celebrity divas has made him a celebrity within the industry, and he sees his youth as an advantage. "People trust that young people are in tune with what's now, which is important with what I do. I'm expected to bring something new and innovative to the table. I don't think that there are any disadvantages anymore because before I looked upon the age thing as a reason for my lack of confidence, but that has changed. My confidence is everything. My confidence is the foundation.

"For me, the key to getting what you want is first knowing what you want. The only thing standing in between me and letting it happen would be me."

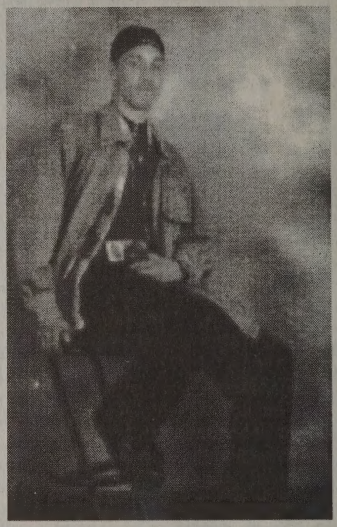
"I feel now I can do anything and I want it all. I want my name to be on billboards, posters, perfume bottles, everywhere."

He confesses that no one experience in the glamourous world of showbizness stands out because "they've all been really exciting adventures. Everyday that I go work a new job is like the first day of school."

And what is his advice to other young people who want to break into the business? "Understand that you will make mistakes because you're only human, but learn from those mistakes. Don't regret anything. Believe in yourself and know that you can do anything you want to do. It only matters how bad you want to do it."

And what does he ultimately want out of life? "I just want to be remembered." And who is his hero? "God. God is the only presence that has me starstruck."

JAUMONTA ROBERTS, 20
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELOR
Jenesse Center Inc.



Juamonta (pronounced 'Juh-montay')Roberts has spent most of his 20 years living and working in and around South Central Los Angeles. Currently the youngest counselor at the Jenesse Center, a Watts-located facility primarily for abused women that offers a variety of community services for clients of all ages, Montay, as his friends call him, has overcome the personal challenge of growing up in a single parent home where his mother was a substance abuser and moved constantly ("Momma was a rolling stone"), to go on to helping others both through counseling and example.

"I've always been that helping kind person, but my involvement with the Jennesse Center happened by accident, or actually something good coming out of something bad. I got a traffic ticket and my fine was to do community service there, and after they saw what I could do they just hired me on. I've been there now for over a year.

"It's a vocational center for battered women. We have other services there too, like group counseling, individual counseling, job placement; we find transitional housing for them, we receive donations and distribute them to clients. It's truly a safe haven.

"We also handle, on a smaller scale, alcoholism, but when it's on a larger scale we refer them to other places."

Because of his first-hand experience with his mother, Juamonta does not drink and does not do any kinds of drugs: "Mainly, my mom went through the whole drug thing, whatever. By seeing her abuse just put me in the mind to where I know it is something that I will not have in my life. It's not necessary, not necessary at all. To me, there's no purpose to drugs and alcohol. And it was not difficult to resist it. You see what it does, you realize that's not what you want done to you. I just found better things to do with

my life."

A self-confessed workaholic, Juamonta spends up to 50 hours a week at The Center and, up until recently, spent his weekends as a volunteer counselor for the Colors United project.

"Colors United is a non-profit organization that teaches literature to inner city students through art and drama and music. I feel that a lot of inner city kids are not making it through school because they just don't know how to read or they're having problems expressing their feelings on paper. The best way to express that is to show them. Period. Show them using drama, paper, art, influence, you know? Physical influence. Don't sit there in a class all day and tell them 'well read this book' and walk away. Put them in the book, involve them, get them to make a play about it, something that's going to stick."

He himself was a student of Colors United when he was in high school. The experience had such a profound effect on him that he knew that he had to become involved after graduation. "It's very important to me to give back to the community. It should be important to everyone."

Giving up his work with Colors United was a painful decision but he realized that for him to be able to give the best of himself to The Jenesse Center, he could not spread himself too thin. "I get so much satisfaction out of my job. It is so great when a client comes back happy and fulfilled and says 'this is what I'm doing know, this is how I've changed and I want to come back and contribute.' It's knowing that this person's life has turned around. There are so many women who don't even make it out [of the battered woman's syndrome]. They stay in an abusive relationship forever, and that one time the police don't make it there in time, that woman, those women don't make it at all.

"Then also, the kids; when a child comes in the first day, they're reclusive, they're withdrawn from everyone else, but after awhile, when they come in, they're happy to come back, knowing that they have someplace to go where they don't have to face all those other problems."

"And sure, a lot of people come here and cause problems, they start problems, they try to find problems, but that's only because they're still trying to adjust. So you have to just give them they're space and let them make their own way. And sometimes it doesn't work, and they'll say 'well, we're just gonna have to leave.' Now we're not holding hostages so if they wanna go they can go, but if you come back, it's our policy to assess you once again to see if you're stable enough to be here, but if you can't stay here, we'll refer you because we're not the kind of place that just throws you out on the streets so you have to try and fend for yourself."

Juamonta confesses that, as a 20 year old, slender 6 ft. tall, black homosexual, his heavy work schedule and his youth don't leave much time or opportunity for a social life.

"You're right. Not much of a social life at all. I'm serious. I mean, I want to go and do things. But I'm going to wait until I'm 21, because even though I don't drink, still, there are a lot of places I can't go because of the age restriction. I can't really associate myself with a lot of the young people I know because of what they're all doing. So many of them are smoking weed, drinking---I don't need that. And the majority of the people I want to hang around with are at the social clubs that I can't go into. And that's what kills me. I don't want to go in there and drink, I want to be around people who I consider more of my caliber, more mature. I mean, I know people now who are 24 who act like they're 16, and I can't imagine myself sitting around being like that."

"Maturity is definitely an important quality, but I like having fun just like the next guy. Still, I like knowing there's an adult attitude somewhere within that fun."

What keeps him strong?

"I keep me strong. I haven't really figured out how, but I know it's me."

Although very easy going, hard to anger and full of humor, Juamonta personal strength is an important aspect of his ability to confront the reality of personal demons he battles constantly:

"I have a friend that I've been dealing with like forever, and it's just getting too hard trying to keep him happy and keeping me happy and there's nothing coming out of it, he's mainly just there when he needs some money, and that's not who I am. I don't need someone draining my pocket and I'm working hard everyday trying to make something out of myself. I know that part of the problem is that I feel strongly about him but he doesn't feel the same about me, but he can still sit there and ask me for everything and not care about what I need.

"I know that I'm going to have to tie up all my loose ends and move on. That's the best thing for me to do. I hate to do it because I am madly, head-over-heels in love, but that particular love is not going to do me any good for my future."

"I guess what it is is that I'm going through my own psychologically abusive situation, and it's bad when a counselor gets in trouble because here I am helping other people and I can't help myself. So it's time for me to move on and help myself. It's time for me to follow my own advice.

"The other day I was sitting around and I was depressed about what he put me through. It's this thing about wanting someone to love you. Now my little sister's there and she's only three years old, and I pick her up and I'm holding her and she says, 'I love you, Montay'. And I don't see my little sister but like 6 times out of the year, and for her to say that---out of the blue---it brought me to tears. It's like all I really want is for somebody to love me for who I am, not for what I can do for them, not for what I have done for them.

"I've been battling with my love life for years. It's like, I didn't think of myself as really looking for someone until after high school, but all through high school I'd been pushing, suppressing and everything else because I didn't need my family or anybody else criticizing me for wanting to be with who I wanted to be with in my life; being gay, all those things. And even now it's still hard because my family is speculating, and I keep thinking that if I wasn't gay, would I have to discuss with them who I want in my life? I shouldn't have to tell you and you shouldn't care. It shouldn't matter. So I'm still dealing with that. But after high school I decided that I was going to find someone for me, and then the one guy that I find doesn't love me in that way. So I'm at a lost for the moment."

If Juamonta considers himself romantically lost at the moment, the clients and staff at The Jenesse Center know that he is a true find. In spite of his personal challenges, his youthful enthusiasm and genuine caring for the people he works with and for has made him a shining role model in South Central.

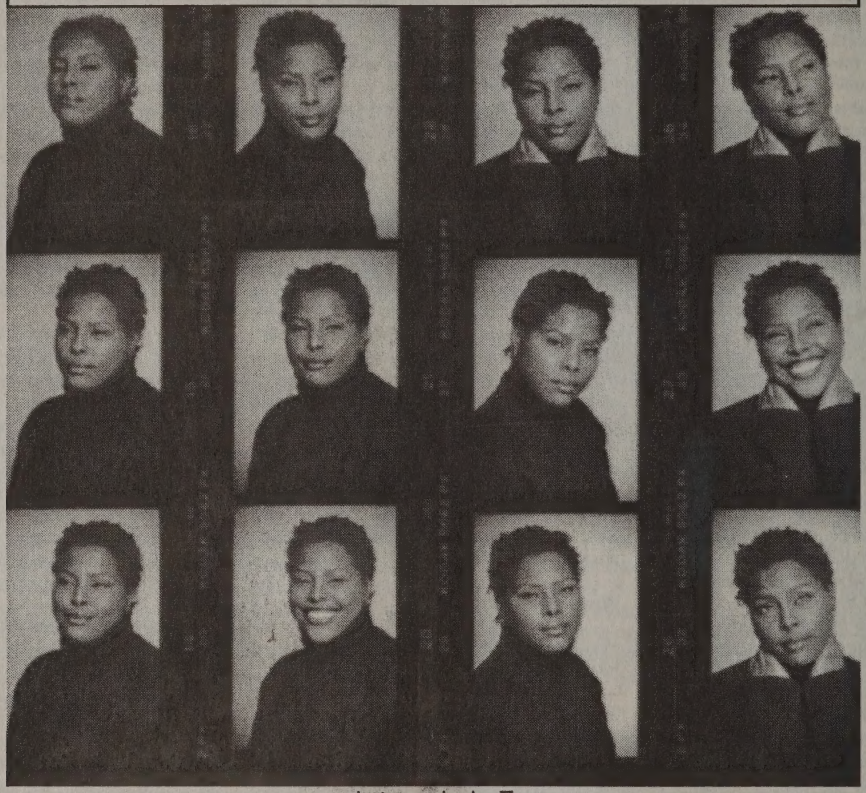
Indeed. The pain of young love is but another growing pain experienced by us all. It is part of the rite of passage. And for Juamonta Roberts, whose goal it is to start his own community-based organization for kids to keep them off the streets, the love he gives out shall, in time, reflect back on him like the warm rays of the sun. It may take awhile. It could happen tomorrow. It could be happening at this very moment.

Sometimes a little pain means healing is just around the corner.

MICHELLE PACNETT, 20

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/ PERSONELL DIRECTOR

BB&T Medical Transcription Services



photography by Tory

20 year old Michelle Packnett, academically gifted, graduated at the top of her class a year early from Beverly Hills High School in June of 1995, attended Texas Southern University in Houston where she majored in Criminal Justice, returned to Los Angeles where she is currently Majoring in Business Administration at Santa Monica College and is currently Director of Personnel and Administrative Assistant of the family owned business BBT&T, a medical transcription corporation. With 15 employees under her supervision, Michelle is adept at maintaining quality control for the company.

"We provide typed documents of medical data, reports and studies that have been dictated onto a tape or a disk by doctors and medical professionals which means that we have to be very up on medical terminology because we are also typing up documentation of patient reports and analysis," she informs proudly. "Overseeing everything, making sure it's running smoothly is the challenge for me. Our major client happens to be UCLA. If something goes wrong, UCLA will call me with their concerns and their needs. And I'm still learn-

ing how to deal with people in this context. My grandmother, who founded the business, is still teaching me how to deal without folding. People skills are definitely necessary to do the job that I do.

"When hiring staff, I'm looking for experience and a sense of dedication. Overall personality is needed, but in this line of work experience is a must because we don't have the time to be training people."

Michelle became fully aware of her sexual nature at the age of 15: "[The discovery] was pretty easy-going. It was new. I think that people are more liberal, more accepting these days, but there are still those that want to call you faggot and homos, but I didn't surround myself with people like that. And then, before my peers even knew about me, I kind of new what frame of mind they were in. So when they did found out it wasn't a problem."

Although she doesn't flaunt her homosexuality, or even put that much emphasis on it, Michelle believes that it is important to live your life truthfully and the way you want to live it because "you're the one that has to live it for yourself. Your happiness should come first, as life is too short. I am not ashamed of who I am and I am proud to be gay."

Michelle's exceptional self-confidence and pride are borne not only from academic ability and mature business savvy, but from strong family support, particularly from her mother:

"My mother is my main influence, telling me to be who I am and be happy. She believes that if I'm happy than that's what I should do. My mother and I are very close, but I remember when I was 15 and I was looking at this female in high school and I wanted to get with her, and I told Mom that I met this girl and I was real excited, and she wasn't hearing me. She thought it was just as a friend, and I wanted to tell her the truth but I didn't, and it took me so long. In fact, I didn't tell her. She found out from someone else that I was seeing this other female. And the worse part about it was not that I was seeing this other female, but because I didn't tell her myself and she had to find out through someone else. She said to me 'Michelle, that's the number one rule. I don't want to hear it from someone else. I want to hear it from you.' But after that everything was smooth."

Michelle with her mother Sherri at the Long Beach Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration

Indeed, it was Michelle's mother, Sherri Packnett, who contacted SBC regarding profiling her daughter.

"Although I only have one child, I could not me more proud of her." stated Sherri Packnett. "Michelle has never given me a moment of discontent. She has never been involved in drugs, tobacco or alcohol. She is polite and respectful to her elders and knows right from wrong.

"Being the parent of a gay person, I find no different than any other parent. Love is love. I love my child tremendously and would die for her. She has many gay friends and I treat them all no differently than I treat my own daughter. As my child is respectful, so are her friends. You reap what you sow. You surround yourself with what makes you comfortable.

"I am known for saying 'I got ya back' to my daughter all the time. And I do. I have her back, front and sides. I am in total support. My family---grandparents, parents, brother, cousins, etc.---all know Michelle's sexual preference and it makes no difference to them. They love her for who she is and not whom she chooses to love. I would have it no other way."

Michelle is also Vice President of PacNet 2000, a new venture directed toward providing web-page design and web-site development services. The secondary goal of PacNet 2000 is to provide web-page hosting and advertising within a planned internet virtual supermall.

"First of all, my goal is to turn the family business into a mutli-million dollar company. I want us to be national, because that's family. And with PacNet, I want the same thing without spreading myself too thin."

Currently single, she confesses that she wants "what everybody else wants. I want someone to share my wealth and my life and my love with; to love me, to know that they're going to be there, that I'm going to be there for them. I already have the family part of it---the support---but my goal is to get my career straight and stable and then find a (love) partner, someone on the same level as I, someone with an equal ambition level; goal oriented. That comes first. And then the type of person that is loving, and all that good stuff. But goals and ambition are a must with me. You have to be doing something with your life, even if it's a little slow going."

And what does she want the older generation to know about her generation?

"When I was at The Catch One [Disco] and I was playing pool with this lady, and she was kind of on the studly side, she referred to herself as butch, and a friend of mine is also quote 'butch', and this lady I was playing pool with---her name was Tony---was saying to me 'well from my generation, if you were a butch you were a butch, you didn't wake up the next morning feeling: oooh, I think I wanna put on a dress. You didn't flip-flop back and forth.' So I guess her looking at me, I guess I kind of came across like I was in the middle because I could put on a dress one day and then the next put on some baggy pants or suit up. So that whole observation was very interesting to me; to hear that point of view. It's not necessarily that I could jump from one to the other.

"Now, although I'm not one for dresses per se, I'm also not one for suits. I'm a woman. But more than that, I don't try to represent myself as either/or. I'm just Michelle, you know what I'm saying? And I deal pretty good with that. People always tell me, 'Hey, I saw you and you just look cool, like easy going, like I can talk to you.' So she (Tony) was referring to my generation. And to be quite honest, I don't know about my generation, I know about myself. "

And she knows what she wants out of life and out of love. At 20, Michelle Packnett has already accomplished a lot. But for Michelle, she hasn't even scratched the surface. You go girl!

NAHSHON ANDERSON, 20
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Russell Simmons' 'One World' TV Show

"Why am I in show business? Because there's no business like show business! Ever since grade school I knew that I belonged in show business."

From starting out as an 'extra' on such TV shows as Moesha and The Steve Harvey Show at the age of 18 to today at age 20 and being courted by the Larry Flynt Publishing Company where he's submitted his concept for a new black gay hip-hop magazine, Nahshon Anderson has squeezed in more diverse experiences than many entertainment veterans. Zipping through Hollywood in his white Honda, Nahshon power-brokers from the offices of Russell Simmons' west coast offices coordinating production for the One World Music Beat television show, from the SBC offices where he's employed as the Production Coordinator and Sales Associate, and from his Studio City Apartment where he lives alone with his trusty phone, wheeling and dealing, on his way to being "a media mogul, the next Ted Turner".

"It wasn't so much that I didn't like being in front of the camera it was just that I was an extra, and I didn't like the way the business treats extras. And besides, I could see that behind the camera is where the power is."

And where the power is is where Nahshon, known in production circles as the energizer bunny, is planning his moves. By the time he started working on Russell Simmons' One World Music Beat, where he is responsible for securing background material and files on the various celebrities being interviewed, checking the accuracy of show credits, transcribing interviews and coordinating the music segments, Nahshon was already an industry veteran. While still in his teens, he was a production assistant for the Robert Urich Talk Show pilot, the Make Me Laugh Game Show and Assistant to the Executive Producers of the Keenen Ivory Wayans Show before the show was canceled.

"In TV the things that you make happen, you realize millions of people see it, they see your work," he declares in his characteristically high energy cadence, "Even in the work I do now as a production coordinator. The smallest little thing I do---like the show's credits---people see."

Born in Pasadena and reared in a single parent household along with 4 other siblings, Nahshon's upbringing was strict and religiously intolerant of his sexual nature. "I didn't know exactly what to call it until I was 16. I knew that I loved men and that I was gay. Being brought up in a Jehovah's Witness household, homosexuality just wasn't an issue. It just wasn't acceptable or talked about. And I wanted to make everyone was happy, so I tried to change my feelings. I wanted to be like everyone else around me, living miserably in a fictitious world where other people determine your worth and your desires. So I came out to my mother for help. Which really caused problems.

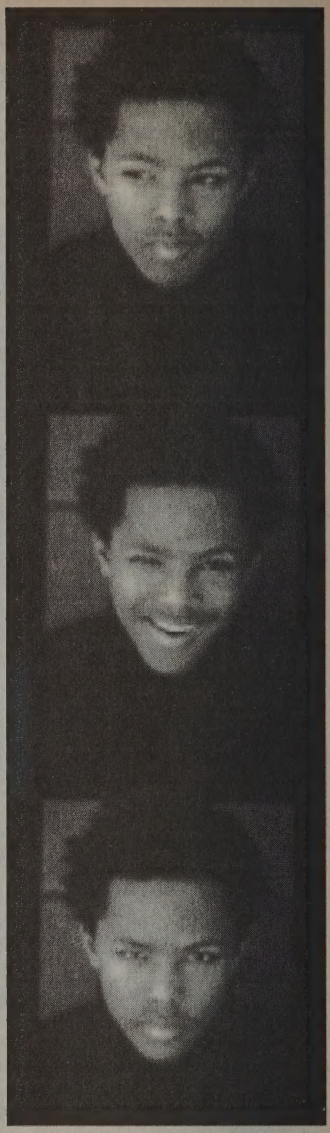
"I didn't love myself very much back then and I had very low self-esteem. I even contemplated suicide. After all the praying I did to change and after all the talk I got from my mother about how bad gay people were, I just couldn't take it anymore. Suddenly, I just got tired of suppressing this very important part of my life. My love for men was getting stronger and stronger and I just couldn't fight the feelings anymore. So I decided to take control of my life and chose to live my life for myself and be happy with who I was.

"It wasn't easy, but I moved away from home, living with my aunt for awhile. My aunt was very proud of me and proud to have me as her nephew.

"Eventually my mother came around and we made up. And I know it was hard for her, but she made one of the most important decisions of her life. She decided to be a part of my life no matter what my sexuality was."

Restless and eager to break in the biz, Nahshon attended college only briefly after graduating from high school. After his unfulfilling stint as an 'extra', he got his first behind-the-scenes gig at Look Hear Production where he interned for a week. Shortly thereafter, he was put on the payroll. He did grunt work on several low budget videos and then graduated to being a Production Assistant on music videos for such artists as Mase, Master P and Taral Hicks.

"Every job I ever got I got on my own. I'm very good at breaking down doors and harassing producers."



Hollywood being a feast or famine kind of town, high unemployment and sudden set backs are the norm. With the cancellation of The Keenan Ivory Wayans Show, Nahshon found himself out of a job.

"You just have to realize that in this business one day you may have a job and the next day you don't. It's not personal. It's the nature of the beast. You have to prepare ahead of time. You have to make your connections and you have to pace yourself. You have to know that you might come in to work tomorrow and the show might be canceled. I set myself up so that I know that nothing is forever in this industry. You could be sitting on top of the world one day, the next day you could be in the unemployment line. And, you know, I like it that way, because once you do work on these shows, you get to know the people on the show and if you're not happy with it, you can

just move on."

Although he was out of work for, what seemed to him, an eternity, he didn't give up hope. After a while his 'availability' became known and he was soon offered jobs at a major record label, the TV show Everybody Loves Raymond, and Russell Simmons' One World. He took One World. "I chose One World because I wanted to return to my hip-hop roots. And Russell Simmons is crazy in a good kind of way. But really, working for Russell Simmons is like working for anybody else. He's just a little bit more popular, he has a little bit more money and he has a lot more power, but other than that Russell Simmons is just like anybody else. I mean, before I started working on the show I was saying, 'Oh, my God, I'm working for Russell Simmons, but as I got to know him, I saw that he was just a person like everybody else."

But once again in Hollywood, good things come to an end like a final credit roll.

"One World is going on hiatus and I'm actually happy. I didn't get fired, I didn't quit, I didn't give up. I stuck in there and gave it one hundred percent and it's time to move on. It's like a baby. It got older and it's like you have to let it go. I like it like that. I feel free. I don't feel like I'm attached. I don't feel like I have to keep going in to the same job everyday. I like it because it's forever changing. I like living on the edge like that. You never know what the next show, what the next production is going to be like. You never know who you're going to be working with and to top it off you're working with all these fabulous people 'cause this is Hollywood."

And Nahshon plays as hard as he works. He has done drag several times and loves it. "I went out on Halloween all dressed up and I didn't just go to the Catch One (L.A.'s largest disco that's owned by lesbian businesswoman Jewel Thias-Williams), I went to West Hollywood and Universal City walk. I consider myself the supermodel of the universe. I was beat from head to toe and it was weird for me because I had people coming to me asking me if I was a girl or a boy, and I would tell them 'well, I'm a guy.'

"I love doing drag. But to be totally honest with myself, it's not something I can totally handle right at this point now in my life. But I'm definitely planning to explore it in the future and to see what comes out of it.

"I love dressing up as a woman. It's just a part of me. What I like about it is that it enables me to become a totally new character. "

"Everybody in the club is trying to be all macho and everything, and it's like, just because you're gay you don't have to be feminine, but it's like we are gay and there are a lot of feminine gay guys just like there are a lot of masculine gay guys.. But it's just that you get so many weird looks, people saying don't look at me, don't bump into me, you bump into somebody and you say excuse me and they're just so afraid. And the thing about it is when I first started going out I was so afraid of drag queens because I knew there was that little girl inside of me screaming 'I wanna be in a dress, I want the heels and the pumps but I was afraid to explore that, and now I'm like loving it. I love drag queens. I think they're fabulous. They're talented and people should give them their due props. It takes a lot. It takes a lot to get into a pair of high-heels, tuck that dick, suck that tummy in, primp that hair out, get that make-up, do all that plucking and tucking and stuff. It's not something that just happens in a few minutes. It takes a lot of time and effort to get out there looking like a supermodel. I mean, I see what Tyra and Naomi and Ru and all the other girls do to be fabulous, and I love it. I love it!

Nahshon also loves that fact that he is completely out on the job. "I wouldn't have it any other way. Now that I'm becoming more open and honest with myself, I just look at some guys that are in the closet and I understand some of why they are, but I also understand that they're going through a whole lot of pain. I feel sorry for them. And I don't know if I want to be around them, or involved with them. It's just weird. I don't know. I know some people say that work is work and play is play but it's like if on the job somebody says something (about being homosexual) and it's offensive and you don't speak up and say something, they're going to keep on doing that over and over and sometimes you have to let them know, you have to put them in check.

"When I was working on the Keenan Ivory Wayans Show I wasn't out the closet. I was running around acting like I was the straightest little boy, but everybody could see right through me. I didn't say anything so they didn't say anything. But now that I've become older---six months down the line---I said that this has to change. The industry is run by homosexuals---the make up artist, the hairstylist, the wardrobe people, the producers, the directors, especially the directors---they have all this power and yet and still they run around all in the closet and it is the sickest thing, and it's just to the point where I don't care anymore."

Nahshon confesses that sometimes he puts a lot on his plate and it can result in a lack of focus. But it is something that he is working on. "What makes me happy is people knowing my name, knowing my work, knowing who I am. Also, being more honest with myself, loving myself more and just accepting who I am and dealing with it, not putting who I am on a shelf or on the back burner or shying away from it. Nahshon is changing everyday. I know Nahshon wants the best out of life, I want to be around for centuries and centuries and I want to make my mark on this earth. "

"I have a drive. I truly am like the energizer bunny. I just keep going and going and going. It's the ambition. I want it all. I want the best out of life. I want to be surrounded by the best people in life. I love what I do. When I go to work it's not like going to work at all---except when some producer gives me a hard time with some bullshit I don't want to deal with, but other than that, it's it. I know you never say never, but I just don't see me working in any other thing. I worked in the mall, I worked at Denny's, I worked at a theme park, I was a janitor, I watched over kids in the school yard, I worked with mentally challenged people---I started work when I was 14, so I've done a lot of different things, but I found my niche in life in what I'm doing now.

"Sometimes I look at it and it is so weird, to be so young and I look at the things I've done, it doesn't seem like reality. I remember sitting up in school listening to the radio, listening to a group, an artist, and now it's like I'm working with these people, I'm seeing them on a daily basis, I'm going to their parties and it just doesn't seem like reality, but it's like I don't know anything else. This is where I belong."

And what's in his immediate future? Even though One World is going on hiatus, the producers have already offered him a raise, that is, if the show returns. But whatever happens, Nahshon Anderson is not worried. The uncertainty is part of the high.

"I keep having these different opportunities. One day I'll be sitting at home looking for a job and the next thing I know I'll have 3 different people asking me if I want to work on a television show. Hey, there's no business like show business, and I'm a show biz baby. Besides, if push comes to shove, I can always be the supermodel of the universe!"

BOYS CRUZIN '98...EAST COAST STYLE

by Dwayne Jenkins, Tennessee Correspondent

On Monday, September 7th, Labor Day, the much anticipated second annual Black Gay Cruise set sail for a 4 day cruise to Nassau, Bahamas, the private island of CoCo Cay, and Key West. Coordinated by Levi R. Johnson through TravelMax International on The Royal Caribbean Cruise line Sovereign of the Seas, 59 Same Gender Loving men came from Australia, Chicago, Atlanta, Oakland, Milwaukee, D.C., New York, Detroit, New Haven, Fort Worth, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chattanooga and Nashville for fun and fellowship on the high seas of the warm Caribbean. Throughout the cruise the 2500 plus other passengers on board took note of our collective presence as proud same gender loving men of color. The positive and overwhelming reaction to the Brothers United Nashville group t-shirts from the other passengers was startling and self-affirming. The Nashville group also distributed Safer Sex kits to our group and others compliments of Nashville CARES, the largest and oldest AIDS Service Agency in Tennessee. There was also a small, but silent protest stirring in Nassau in nervous anticipation of an upcoming ship that was expected to dock with a large group of "homosexuals" on board. Two of our group's men were actually interviewed by the media about what this reporter thought was about to happen later that weekend. Little did he know that we were already there and he was already talking to "Black homosexuals"! The response given in short was that there would be no way of determining who was who, and if some people in the Bahamas were worried about us visiting, they should also worry about the money we could certainly spend elsewhere." Needless to say, nothing came of it, and later that night those who left the ship from our group took over the local gay club...East Coast Style!!

The only other non-related event that made waves was when a passenger suffered a seizure while having sex. This gentlemen's female companion ran out of her cabin naked screaming up and down the hallway for help. It was later said that he had been drinking heavily and had forgotten to take his medication that day...or maybe his vitamins.

It was great to assemble and travel together as a family on vacation. A lot of new friends were made, and everyone is eager to sign up for next year. There are a few different events in the works for next year and they are as follows: Reunion Cruise to San Juan, Puerto Rico Memorial Day Weekend 5/26-6/2/99; Passport Series: Taste of Britain: London/Scotland Labor Day Week 1999; and Boyz Cruzin '99 to Ocho Rios, Jamaica, or Singles to either Nassau or Mexico during Memorial Day Weekend 5/29-6/1/99.

For more information contact Levi at mrlanta@ix.netcom.com; Michael at Nubian NubianATL@aol.com; or me, Dwayne, either at BrosUnited@aol.com or 1.800.845.4266 ext. #169. You can also receive a lot of information from the web site at http://www.netcom.com/~mrlanta/black-cruise.html.

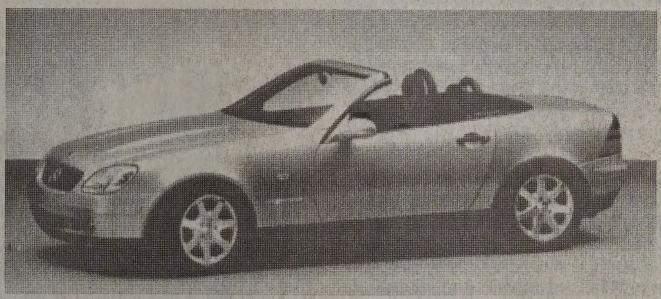
Please note that all races, family members and genders are welcome to participate. Black same gender loving men will just be the majority. Looking forward to seeing you next year!

CAR OF THE YEAR: MERCEDES-BENZ SLK ROADSTER

By Nikki J. Muhammad, Consumer Advocate

At the closing of each year, I always select a vehicle that scores extremely high on my rate chart. Well this SLK has blown the chart right off the wall. My dream sports car is only $39,700 (suggested retail price) and it's automatic.

This SLK Roadster has a high-performance 185-horsepower supercharge, intercooled engine that gives you a surge of sports car power. Although it is a two-passenger, I still felt like Queen of the road. What Power! From 0-60 mph in a blink over seven seconds. The SLK's crankshaft-driven supercharger is an adaptation of the Roots "blower", which was invented by Americans Francis and Philander Roots 130 years ago. Twin three-lobed rotors turn at up to 12,000 rpm within the oval compressor housing, compressing incoming air. An intercooler then cools the pressurized air, which creates a denser intake charge to boost power further.



The SLK has been designed as a sports car for all seasons and reasons, and this is made clear by the car's most unique feature---a fully automatic retracting hardtop. The current Mercedes SL models introduced the industry's first fully automatic operation for the convertible top, and the SLK takes this technology a step further. Pushing one button triggers a sequence of events that transforms the SLK from a closed coupe to a fully open roadster in 25 seconds. When I pushed that button everyone around came to see. It became an event.

A new technology called BabySmart turns off the passenger air bag whenever a BabySmart-compatible infant, toddler or child booster seat (available from Mercedes dealers) is belted in. This system, standard on most 1998 Mercedes-Benz models, is a special benefit in a two-seater like the SLK, since rear-facing child seats are too closed to the air bag and can't be placed in a rear seat.

The contemporary styling of the SLK includes cues from rich heritage of Mercedes-Benz racing and sports cars, such as the supercharged SSK of the 1920s and the 300SL of the 1950s and 60s.

The two-tone leather interior is unlike anything Mercedes-Benz has ever put into a production car. The SLK interior blends modern design, classic touches and functional luxury.

There are three factory options: heated seats for $595, metallic paint for $600 and a choice of integrated mobile phone/CD changer for $1,895.

This SLK comes with a four-year/50,000 mile warranty which includes tires, batteries and adjustments for the full coverage period. In addition, all Mercedes cars, regardless of model year, are covered by the 24-hour Mercedes-Benz Roadside Assistance Program. This includes a free jump start, mounting of the spare tire or a few gallons of fuel, even for a decades-old model.

LEVAN HAWKINS...

Writer/poet/performance artist LeVan Hawkins says he wishes he had been alive and in New York during the Harlem Renaissance. We were discussing an exhibition that has been on display for several months at the Los Angeles County Museum, "Rhapsodies in Black Art in America." We were also discussing a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times*, "A Community's Cultural Heartbeat," (October 9, 1998) in which the city's Leimert Park cultural enclave was called the center of a renaissance galvanized by the 1992 uprising. The current outpouring of artistic endeavor in Los Angeles' African-American community is reminiscent of the Harlem Renaissance, but it is still nascent, although burgeoning, with a direction not yet firmly chartered and an identity not yet full fledged. If we were further along and more aware of what is going on, surely, by now this flurry of creativity would have been labeled by some intrepid observer. As of yet, this new renaissance is still barely discernible on the public radar, and many of the artists, writers and intellectuals who are taking part in this movement continue to work in obscurity. Artists such as sculptor Lavialle Campbell, poet Makeda Canon, and virtuoso jazz singer Phyllis Battle are little known outside the areas in which they craft their art. Still, for anyone truly interested, it is apparent that in this house, Los Angeles is a place where a unique flowering of creativity is taking place.

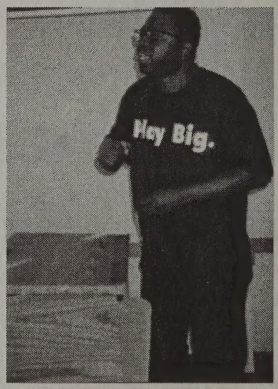
In speaking of the current arts scene in Los Angeles, if the name LeVan Hawkins is not mentioned an unfortunate oversight is being made. The *Los Angeles Times* article focused most of its attention on the poetry movement that is centered at The World Stage performance center in Leimert Park. LeVan Hawkins has read at The World Stage, and over the last year or so he has woven his recent poetry into an evocative performance piece *A Symphony to Find Myself*. Presenting this work, he has in fact worked a circuit that provides a virtual road map to the vibrant spoken word arts scene in Los Angeles. And whether performing at a 99-seat equity waiver theater in Hollywood, a coffeehouse in Inglewood, a bookstore in Santa Monica, or elsewhere, more than any other poet who comes to mind practicing his or her craft in the City of the Angeles, Hawkins has stalked the ground of a cultural awakening that is every bit as vibrant as the Harlem Renaissance.

Describing LeVan Hawkins as a renaissance man (he frequently writes and has published featured newspaper and magazine articles and is a speaker much in demand) is a good way of avoiding the trap of labeling him based on the content of his work, especially the content of his poetry. He probably would not mind any fairly accurate description of him, but there is no pigeonholing this man. He poses a challenge for anyone who stops and checks out his art and artistry. One leaves his work asking of oneself who or what we all are or should be and if our acceptance of ready-made or superimposed identity is worth the effort of individual self-oppression and stagnation.

I have had an opportunity to see parts of *Symphony* twice, and I have seen a videotape of the full production as it was mounted at the Hudson Theater in Hollywood earlier in the year. I have read and reread the text, the actual poems on which the performance piece is based. (Hawkins has put them in a small chapbook that should be made available to a wide public.) These poems have a truly everlasting quality. Their rhythm and flow, power and punch, do not depend on Hawkins' performance delivery. On their own, read in silence and privacy, they trigger deep feelings about growing up and the painful process of revelation that leads to maturity. When one is in Hawkins' territory, one inevitably fills in one's personal imagery of those moments of darkness and light that Hawkins' poetry evokes.

Of course, while reading *Symphony* is a very satisfying experience, Hawkins' performance of the poems is not to be discounted and not to be missed. He is a method actor presenting his poetry with brashness and exuberance. His performance of Symphony is a pleasant surprise to anyone lucky enough to see it. A rich pastiche of poetry suffused with pain, it is performed with skill and verve and sweaty passion. Rarely is such beautiful and effective writing delivered with such raw energy and sincerity. Hawkins' performance is as outstanding as his poetry. Symphony as performed by Hawkins is a work that is full of nuance and powerful emotion. Pain becomes defiance, rejection by others becomes acceptance of oneself, and melodrama and tragedy are blunted by the recognition that being singled out because of one's difference is such a mundane occurrence we need wonder why anyone should be made to endure feeling different from others.

Personal responsibility, perseverance and self-acceptance are the overriding theme of *Symphony*. The sexual and racial matrix in which

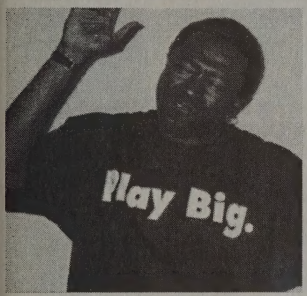


Hawkins must find deliverance as a man is the setting where he works out the riddles posed by the symbols of his own consciousness. Hawkins bears the cross of sex and race in such a way that he makes us share the weight. He makes us feel the meaning behind certain abstract considerations of race and sex that are anything but abstract in how they affect our lives. One might compare Hawkins' poetry and performance to the now obsolete medical practice of "bleeding." Sometimes an artist, like an old country physician, has to open a vein to make a patient well. Artists routinely do this, and poets worth their salt attempt it all the time.

Not many, however, are as successful as Hawkins. He is *not* a maudlin poet no matter the underlying themes of tragedy and regret

that are part of his work. *His pain*, which he makes *our pain*, is symphonic, like chords of pent-up frustration and quiet rage sounding and seething everywhere. It is a canvas on which he shows us the memories of developing that have led him to us. Hawkins is not seeking sympathy, and he echoes the old injunction among African-Americans that sympathy is next to shit in the dictionary. Because he does not seek to elicit our pity, in performance Hawkins looms above the occasion, and the poetry itself is enlarged to provide shelter.

In his apparent magnanimity, Hawkins is not seeking revenge. No, not at all: he is seeking clarification. The lead poem in the *Symphony* performance and chapbook is called, "No Tears." It is dedicated to a "liberal" who had seen in one of Hawkins' journalistic pieces a resonance of pity that it was not Hawkins' intention to display, and that was not in the piece at all. Nothing stings an artist more than to be misunderstood, and in his riposte to the lady liberal, after having subtly drawn in prose the lines of a brutal political reality (police harass-



AND A RENAISSANCE THAT DARE NOT

ment), Hawkins uses poetry to respond to a simple-minded appraisal of his journalistic writing. Clearly the sad sack liberal interpretation was a painful to him as the reality he had been describing and deconstructing. He bites back:

There
Are
No
Tears.
They are saved for greeting card commercials
And sentimental situation comedies...

I tell stories of the unnatural
because ugliness has stopped me from flying.
I am struggling for understanding.
Seeking advice from the masters.
Hoping I am not a pioneer of misery...

There are no tears
I'm not the weepy type
I'm telling you this story because I merely want you
to stop your participation in my madness
And if you haven't actively participated,
Please shut up and listen.

Gwendolyn Brooks, in whose gutsy tradition Hawkins' work falls often, calls her poems *preachments.* Hawkins' poems are of the same sort. They are exhortations that have the weariness of a well-worn sermon. They have the plaintive tone one uses, for example, with a friend or brother or any significant other who won't "straighten up and fly right," as the song says. The self-discovery in the *Symphony* poems is not self-flagellation or spiritual masturbation. It is rather a recreation of that spiritual terrain where we all have to find ourselves. The poet's weariness is that he has to set the parameters of the terrain again. like a man re-chalking a baseball diamond after a double-header. But clearly Hawkins' weariness is a ruse, it is the necessary artifice to show the type of exasperation that is needed to make people get his message. As a last resort, he has turned to the economy of poetry and a low-key disposition of pain and bewilderment to simply say, "Hey, don't you get this yet?" Like Gwendolyn Brooks, Hawkins hails from Illinois, and he mixes Midwestern understatement with the panache of the African-American church tradition to create a poetry of unintended and unsettling consequences.

For example, in the poem "3 Christian Ladies" he lets us into the dilemma posed by a proper Christian upbringing and our lives encased in pagan flesh that is our gift from Adam. In the claustrophobic context of family life, where personal responsibility is traded for the ease and comfort of accepting what authority dictates ("you got to do what the man say"), the reticence the poet has been taught and practices implodes as he is exposed to flesh failures that stir his spirit as well as his loins:

Forgive me, Mother. I can no longer walk through life and nod in unison. I can no longer do what looks good, what feels good, and what is polite. I must tell of spirit and flesh, of light and darkness; of joy and sorrow. I have no choice but to tell the truth. I got to do what the man say. I got to do what he say...

Like all didactic poets---like all poets on a mission---Hawkins uses metaphor with an occasional nod to malice. "Oh Adam" is a spiritually raunchy poem that hollers down the long tunnel of eternity, "Somebody tell me how I got in this mess of living?" Is the Adam of the title a lover-perpetrator the poet is lamenting (first reading), or is he the poet himself (second reading). or is he the generic term for every man and a symbol for the human predicament (third reading)? The only certainty is that the narrator, part narcissist and part altruist, has paid and is paying a high price for self-discovery and revelation:

Oh Adam,
The apple seeds are bitter,
But I teach the children
I uplift my brother
Life keeps pushing
I'm not falling...

Still
I wanna know why'd you make it so hard on me?

The shrink tells me
My failure comes because
There is no selfish motivation.
He smirks and groans
Whenever I speak of serving.
He argues whatever we do,
We do for pleasure...
How do I explain spirit and destiny
To one who bows before an empty alter
How do I explain what I'm afraid to embrace?...

To paraphrase the late Reverent Cecil Franklin, we all have our favorite songs of praise. In Africa, among the griots in the ancient world, among ancient words that our race has forgotten and can no longer conceive, that is what poems were, songs of praise. In the collection of poems offered in Symphony my favorite is "The Voice of God Keeps Calling":

The voices
Are what's left of the little boy who stood on a hill
And vowed to go about his father's business.
I am so racked with guilt
I can no longer enjoy the smallest act of kindness.
Too many nights screaming
I can't believe I'm doing this
This is not who I really am.
I no longer know my name
But the voices
They still linger...

The voices reveal
I am being tested
And I keep falling.
They keep me after school
Until I know the difference
Between destiny and choice.

A psychic says I need to take one step forward
Hard to listen when his hand is on my body.
The bishop says to go for good
But every Sunday he destroys me
I have killed the messenger and the message
I have locked myself in prison
Instead of neckties, I wear chains
I am one step ahead of madness
One step away from falling into the endless well
But the voices still linger...

My many selves stand before me
One step forward...

I took my friend with me the last time I went to see Hawkins perform. My friend is a born mimic, and I find that those things he chooses to imitate are usually the things that catch our lasting attention and stay with us. When we left the Cafe Future and Gallery in Inglewood, all of the way home my friend kept mumbling, "At least I'm a man and you're a sorry bastard." I knew he was not getting personal. He was simply mouthing the refrain that makes Hawkins' poem "Recollection of a Dream," (dedicated to Bayard Rustin and James Baldwin), so powerful and engaging as theater. It is the story of a boy and his alcoholic uncle and how the boy comes to realize that the meaning of being a man is more intricate and demanding than the crippling, casual zingers of men drunk from the stench of their own piss would imply.

****

I do not say this facetiously, but sincerely: whenever I find another artist with a pulse, I am relieved to know I am still alive. With artists like LeVan Hawkins working in Los Angeles, the cultural life of this city has begun to tilt toward greatness. It makes me hopeful that what is going on in Los Angeles can spread to all points of our African-American Diaspora like that ripple on a pond of which the great Nikki Giovanni has written.

In my life, I have observed one or two periods of artistic renaissance as relics. When I was a boy, I revisited the Italian renaissance in and out of a tourist bus. Now, I have seen the vibrancy and urgency of the Harlem Renaissance enshrined in a museum exhibition, packed away under controlled light, and retold in a highly sanitized fashion. Years ago when I lived in Paris, I thought it would have been wonderful to have lived in Paris in the twenties, during the Jazz Age. Like the book with the title *Paris Was Yesterday,* I lamented the world of another day. Now I know I was as lucky and blessed as a man could be to have lived in the Paris of my times. I thank God I have lived long enough to see and appreciate the gold of my own age, and to value the people who matter in my own time. I appreciate LeVan Hawkins' desire to have been part of that magical period called the Harlem Renaissance, I appreciate his participation in the artistic life of this, my city, in this, our time: a renaissance in search of a name and the courage to artists to claim it.

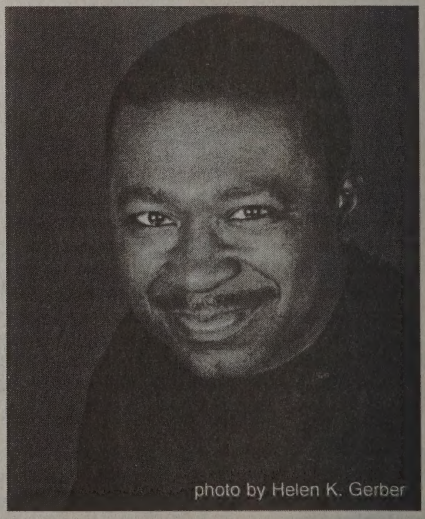


photo by Helen K. Gerber

[LeVan Hawkins' artistry will be on display at the Hudson Theater in December when he premieres his new performance piece Conflicted Sex and Other Experiences. *He is a frequent featured poet at the Future Cafe and Gallery in Inglewood, A Different Light Bookstore in West Hollywood, and in the poetry space at The Midnight Special Bookstore in Santa Monica, California. His story Fred appears in the new anthology Children of the Dream: Our Own Stories of Growing up black in America (Simon and Shuster. LeVan Hawkins can be contacted through Eagle/Hawk Productions, 323.856.6249.]*

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long time companions Dwayne Jenkins and Nathan Mitchell of Nashville, Tennessee
photo by Carlton Wilkinson of ART WORKS

In Tune.

LAURYN HILL

THE MISEDUCATION OF LAURYN HILL
[Columbia]

Months before the release of her debut solo project it was already being called a classic. And this stellar work is definitely living up to its high expectation. The first single *Doo-Wop (That Thing)* is a clever mixture of Lauryn's singing and rapping skills laced on top of each other with its catchy chorus *'Girl you know you better watch out/ Some girls, some girls are only about/ That thing---*

Lauryn also addresses her competition, if you will, on the song *Superstar* which asks the question *'If music is suppose to inspire/ then how come we ain't getting no higher'.*

For anyone who has ever been in love will fall in love with the ballad *Ex-Factor* and the bonus track *Tell Him* where Lauryn gets to flex her vocal muscles in ways that will astonish her most initiated fan.

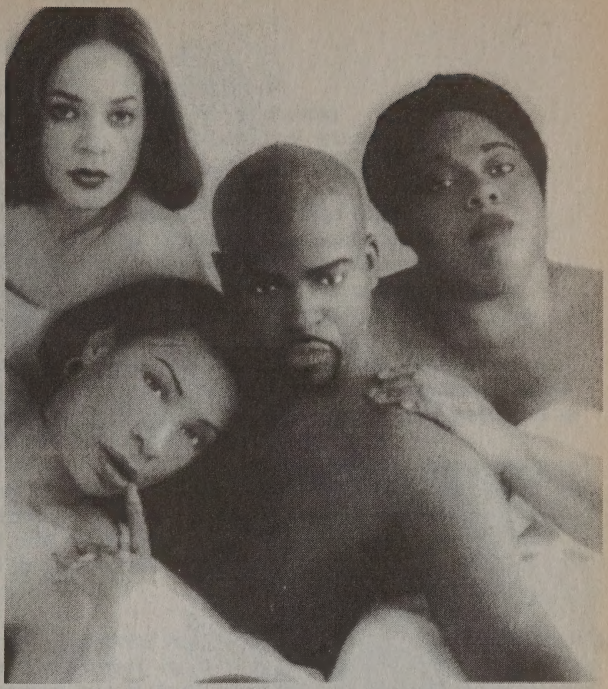
One of the strongest songs in the 15 song collection is a duet with the Queen of Hip-Hop herself, Miss Mary J. Blige. Titled *I Use To Love Him,* this cut beautifully tells the tale of women who once fell in love but later learned that is was good to love but stupid to fall for anything. Mark this one timeless.

In fact, mark this collection timeless. Lauryn Hill, a gifted 23 year old poetess/songtress from Orange, New Jersey, ain't miseducating nobody. She's giving you word vibe chapter verse heart and soul. She's even giving out degrees.

---Tory

DEEPSOULPOETS

LOVE EVOLUTION
[Breakthru Entertainment
www.BREAKTHRU-ENT.COM]



Long ago, I burned-out on the sex talk via rap music. The lyrics of certain performers seemed artless to me. They often "entertained" with sleazy gimmicks and cheap, but catchy rhymes. The child-like shock affect wore down quickly. Listening to deepsoulpoets' debut CD of spoken word/performance poetry fused with music, "love evolution," is a refreshing departure.

Based in Oakland, deepsoulpoets consists of four performance artists: Maurice Jamal; Jan Hunter; Erin Toole; and Seabron. With a wide range of artistic talents and experiences under their collective belts---from professional acting to writing to producing---this cool-as-fuck quartet use well-crafted, meaningful poetry to deliver a mature and polished collaborative result.

There are thirteen sensual tracks; each one about a different aspect of sex and relationships. Deeper Love is about a man's overcoming his fear of falling deeper in love. Daddy is about a woman "pussy-whipping" a man so good (or bad) she tells him to call her daddy. The Sweetest Thing is a bittersweet ode from a woman watching her once-beautiful love drift away like the smoke from her cigarette while a slow piano plays in the b.g. Drive By F-cking is as provocative as its title with a social statement backdropped by the sound of traffic.

The cut titled Freak could have been more of what it claimed, for my taste. Though it was a good re-enactment of some "good" phone sex, phone sex seems to have almost rendered the term "freak" cliché. San Francisco just had its Leather Fetish Week. It would have been interesting to see deepsoulpoets' talent used on some of those "freaks" . . . would that had been too far off-the-edge for a commercial product aimed at Black folks?

deepsoulpoets renders (heterosexual) sex and love artfully and tastefully. "love evolution" is not dance music with a jamming beat. Nor does it need to be. It's merely the word on (heterosexual) sex and love artfully rendered. In other words, it's real rap.

---Kheven Lee LaGrone

DEBORAH COX

ONE WISH
{Arista]]

This sophomore effort from Deborah Cox leaves behind those tired comparisons to Ms. Houston and propels Ms. Cox into a category all her own. With the first song "September" she creeps up on you with soft, silky vocals, and then lets you have it with the no-shit taking (and hopefully the second single) "It's Over Now". The first single, "Nobody's Supposed To Be Here", penned by R & B crooner Montell Jordan's Shep Crawford and boasting strong background vocals and amazing lead vocals, effectively showcases Deborah's range and flexibility.

The album displays the stellar work of several big named writers and producers such as Diane Warren and David Foster and19 year old Rodney Jerkins. Deborah even gets to show off her writing talents this time around.

Dance music is DC's strong suit here. Remixes of "Nobody's Supposed To Be Here" and the number one "Things Just Ain't The Same" will have you ready to hit the club.

ONE WISH lacks the commercial appeal and budget of Brandy's "Never Say Never" or label mate Monica's "This Boy Is Mine", but it's a must-have for anyone who enjoys a gift of al voice wrapped in a beautiful production.

---Tory

Ladies
and gentlemen, you may now
exhale. She's officially back with 13 new tracks
produced by all of your favorite hit makers. Rodney Jarkins,
Wyclef Jean, Missy Elliott, Babyface, Diane Warren and Lauryn Hill
all jumped at the opportunity to work with the Queen of Pop.

It has been eight years since Whitney Houston has made an album that was not a movie soundtrack, but, ironically, it was a movie soundtrack "Prince of Egypt") that brought Whitney back into the studio, teamed with Mariah Carey and Grammy Award-winning producer Babyface. From this the idea of a Whitney Greatest Hits album was spun, which then turned into MY LOVE IS YOUR LOVE, the album Whitney fans have been waiting for all this time.

She is the Pretty Girl From Newark, New Jersey; star of music, movies and television. As fabulously as Diana Ross transformed into a disco diva in the 70's Whitney merges her five-octave range into hip-hop beats as if she were Mary J. Blige with opera lessons.

The opening track, 'It's Not Right But It's Okay', is the upbeat follow-up to the Shoop-Shoop anthem ("If you've ever been played by a man you'll understand"). And Whitney becomes more soulful than ever with the Lauryn Hill-produced 'I Was Made To Love Him', a flipped version of the Stevie tune. The title track, 'My Love Is Your Love', produced by Hill's Fugee-mate Wyclef Jean, is on the gospel tip, laced with a little reggae, which means you can fire one up with The Lord on this one.

Most enjoyable is 'Oh Yes', another dope Missy Elliott track. This one falls under the category of bump n' grind slow jam. Then Faith Evans and Kelly Price lend their sweet and powerful vocals to help out the sistah who paved the way on 'Heartbreak Hotel'.

When Clive Davis calls everyone comes running! With two months to start and complete the album in order for it to meet its release date, the world's busiest songwriters and producers shuffled their schedules to make an album that showcases what sets Whitney apart from all of those other girls.

Aside from the fact that some of the tracks sound a little too Monica, a little too Brandy, a little too Alliah, once you hear the voice there will be no mistaking that Whitney is back!

---Tory

WHITNEY HOUSTON
my love is your love
[Arista]

PATTI LA BELLE & THE BLUE BELLES

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS
[Hip-O Records]

Most of us weren't buying records in 1963, and a lot of you were not even born, but in Philadelphia, the birthplace of American Bandstand (the MTV of the 50's and 60's), Patti LaBelle, a young diva in the making, and her three equally young and talented cohorts--- Cindy Birdsong, Wynona (Nona) Hendryx and Sarah Dash--- were establishing themselves at the head of the burgeoning pack of girl groups.

The innocence of the era and their engaging performances accurately reflect a time when both the group and their hometown were developing a reputation for delivering a silky and yet dynamic sound, rendering contemporary and standard pop tunes with a unique regionality.

These early recordings feature a young and pure Patti sans the trademark histrionics; no screamin', whoops or almighty yellin'. Although this album is over 35 years old, Patti shines as the lead of a very gifted group of young women.

This Christmas CD is very traditional with quite a few standout performances. "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" and "Auld Lang Syne" are sure to bring mistletoe kisses and champagne glasses clinking. Sung with a youthful jubilation filled with holiday zest and hope, Patti and her posse recorded these songs around the time they first hit the R&B top 40 charts with "Down The Aisle (The Wedding Song)".

The girls first split in 1967, forming two of the most popular girl groups of the 60's and 70's. Lovely Cindy Birdsong secretly left and became a sequined member of Diana Ross and The Supremes (like God, Diana is everywhere and involved in all things). Patti, Nona and Sarah reinvented their image, style and singing, becoming

the top charting LaBelle. And later, of course, Patti went on to score with her lengthy and legendary solo career. But this vintage holiday mixture finds the young ladies as deeply connected to each other as they were to their gospel upbringing.

Indeed, the precious Christmas jewel collection presented here will engender sweet memories with it's confection of soul, pop and doo wop. It's a sweet holiday greeting from the past.

---Erik Aston

SEAL

Human Being
[Warner Records]

Seal, via his latest offering, is obviously not content to be the product of another's vivid imagination. He weaves through this experimental collection of songs like a shark voraciously on the prowl for self-awareness and peace with purpose. Searching for a timeless sound is essentially time consuming. For some artist it works (Seal, Lauryn Hill), for others it is a narcissistic cocktail (the former Prince).

Human Being is not perfect, and that's okay 'cause I prefer images a little dog-eared. Let the Spice Girls feature pure pop perfection. Seal delivers a vulnerability that can not be duplicated or immediately consumed. I have always measured an artist by their ability to relay the inner conflict of pain and pleasure, sex and romance, God and...you pick your vice. I suppose the bulk record is infused by the turmoil of relationships, but it is not ruled by such. There are gentle nuggets of joy that greet you & invite the listener to release the burden of whistles and beeps that are so inherently current.

---Jabali Hicks

DOWN IN THE DELTA

Music Inspired by the Miramax Film
[Virgin Records]

This noteworthy collection features a blockbuster lineup of preeminent R&B superstars including Janet, D'Angelo, Stevie Wonder, The Leverts (Gerald, Eddie and Sean), Luther Vandross (featuring Cassandra Wilson and Bob James, Chaka Khan, Shawn Stockton of Boys II Men) Tony Thompson (of Hi-Five), Jazzyfatnastees (featuring The Roots), Me'She'll N'Degeocello and Keb'Mo, Ashford and Simpson, Sounds of Blackness, Stanley Clark, Tracie Spencer and Sweet Honey In The Rock. Songwriters on the project include The Artist and Rodney Jenkins.

"Down In The Delta" (Maya Angelou's feature directorial debut) begins in Chicago where Loretta (Alfre Woodard) lives with her two children and her mother. Loretta is headed down a destructive path as she succumbs to the drug and alcohol-ridden streets of the neighborhood. Making an effort to pull her daughter and grandchildren out of harm's way, Loretta's mother (Mary Alice) pawns her most prized possession and moves the family back to their ancestral home down in the Mississippi delta. The film also stars Loretta Devine, Al Freeman Jr., the late Esther Rolle and Wesley Snipes.

The inspired soundtrack opens with Sunday's "Believe In Love", a gospel flavored track that is totally inspired by Whitney Houston's vocal stylings ala "The Preacher's Wife". Janet delivers a very Jacksonesque ballad, "God's Stepchild", full of the required wavering vocals and dramatic crescendos. It's a page ripped out of Michael's lost childhood diary. The Ohio Players' "Heaven Must Be Like This" is covered by D'Angelo and it's truly representative of early 70's recordings, rich with sexuality, void of counterfeit and laced with conviction. This project is the perfect gift for the holidays. It encompasses the essential elements for survival in today's hostile musical environment. It's important during this season to have a good theme-driven album to put on in any situation and chill. This is it...enjoy!

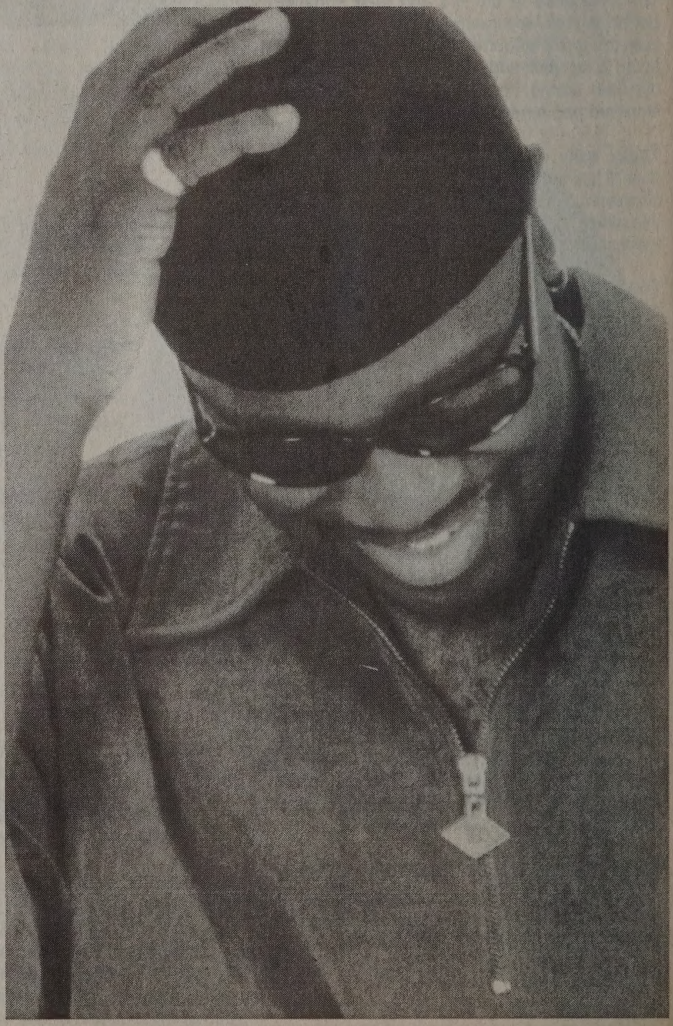
---Jabali Hicks

LEVI LITTLE

Soul Connection
[White Label Music/BMG]

At a time when most "artist" rely so heavily on sample-driven music and regurgitated workings of past efforts it is noteworthy and important to pay tribute to an individual who is "keeping it real" for real. I introduce you to Levi Little, the former lead singer from the group BLACKstreet; the voice that brought you the Michael Jackson-penned, Teddy Riley-produced platinum smash "Joy". He has brought some of that magic to this solo effort which is comprised mostly of soft-core urban contemporary laments of love and relations, sexual and others. Refreshing is more than a description to hear songs inspired by others but not directly lifted, hook by hook, line by line, for the sole purpose of exposing the pose of another cookie-cutter hit record. Let's give Chic, James Brown, Marvin Gaye and George Clinton a break.

---Jabali Hicks



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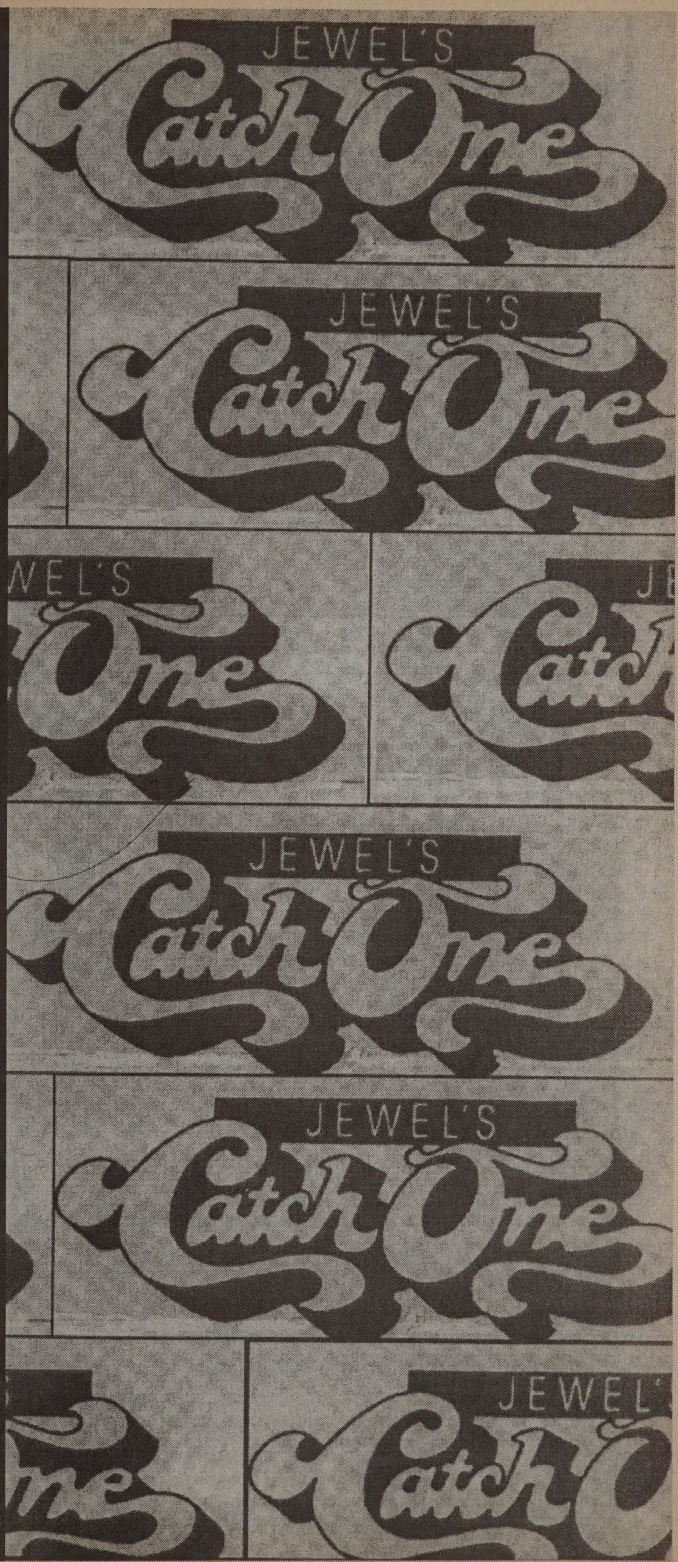

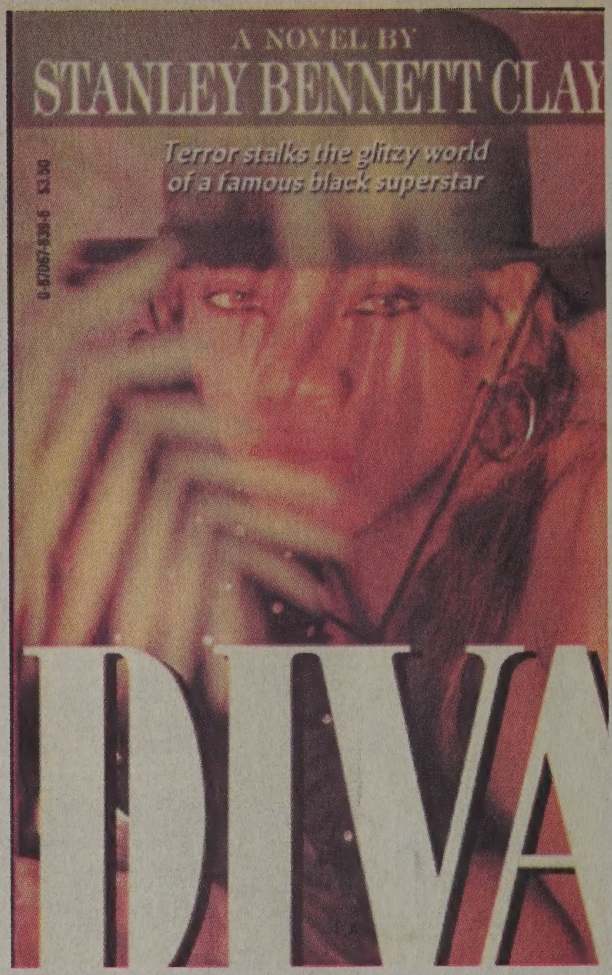

Lights! Camera! Murder!

Beautiful, talented Ida Lake was known as "The Diva" to her millions of fans when she reigned as Hollywood's black singing sensation of the '40s. Her career---and her sanity---collapsed after the suspicious deaths of the husband she adored and the daughter she worshipped and, haunted by rumors of "un-American" activities, Ida took refuge abroad. Two decades later, she has been coaxed into a comeback as the star of a Broadway musical. But tragedy stalks Ida Lake once again as a mysterious web of intrigue, sex, scandal and murder envelops the show. In DIVA, author Stanley Bennett Clay captures the glamour---and suspense---that is show business. Now available through mail order.

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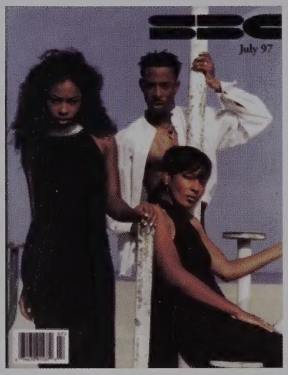

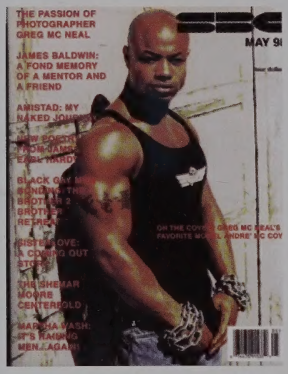
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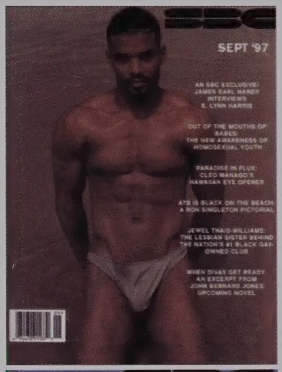

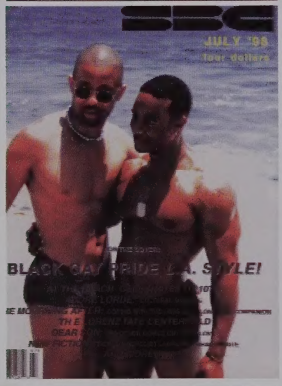

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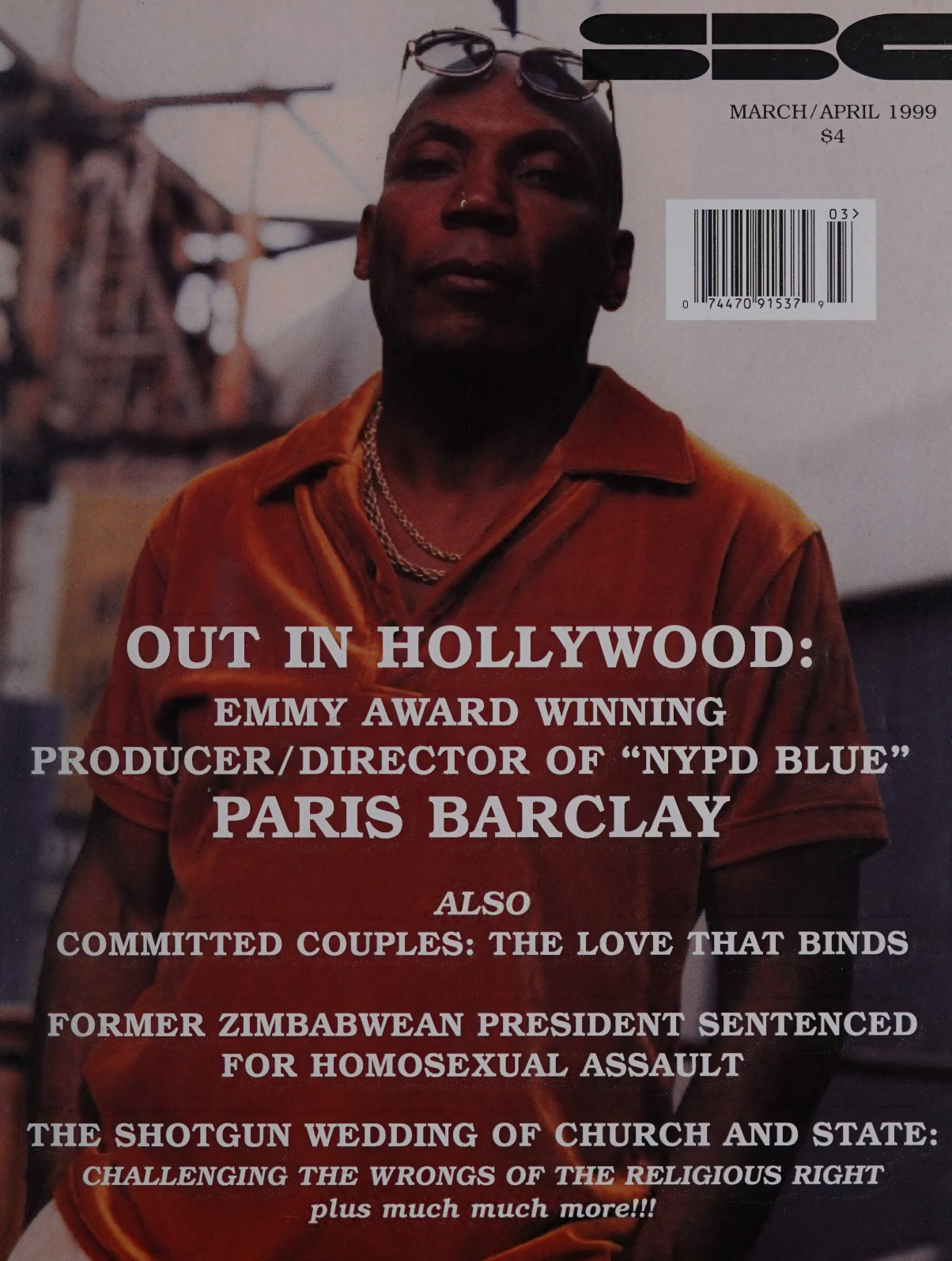

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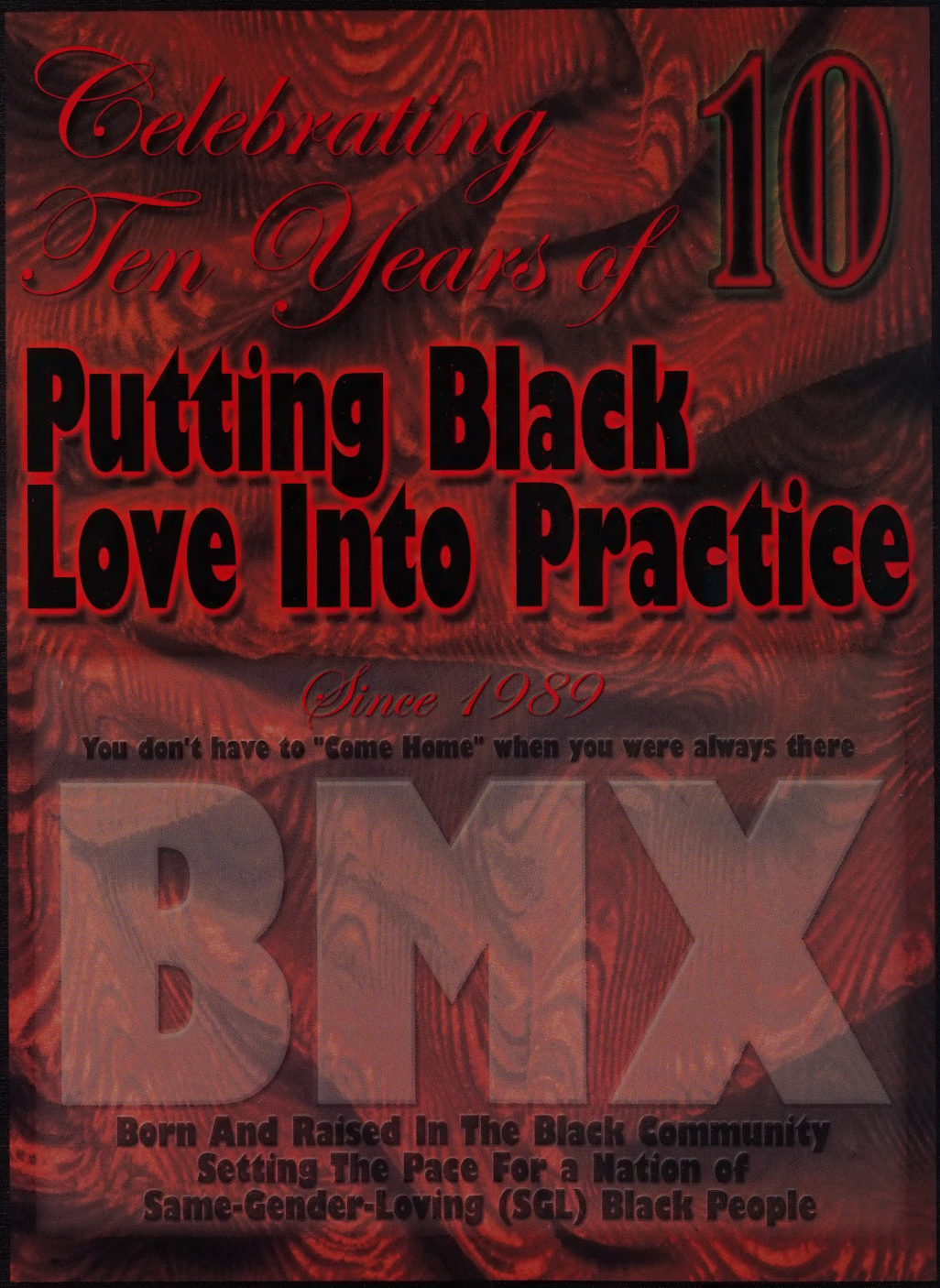
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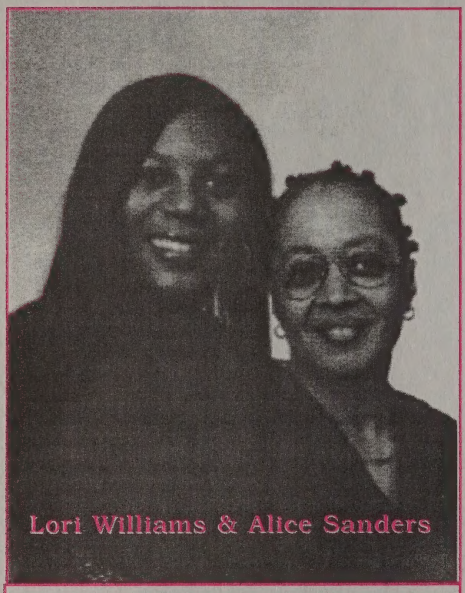

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Dwayne Jenkins & Nathan

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cover photo by Geoff Cordner

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TALK NOW!
TALK LIVE!

POSITIVE IMAGES

A Free Chat Line for Men, Women and Young Adults Living with HIV/AIDS

Call 1-888-600-4POS

(for residents of Los Angeles only)

Positive Images is a program of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, Being Alive, Women Alive, Bienestar Latino AIDS Project, Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team and AIDS Prevention Team/The Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum, and is funded by the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department, Office of the City AIDS Coordinator.

Being HIV+ isn't easy.

It's a daily challenge that can take all you've got. It helps to have an advantage – to lighten your load and keep you going. Federal healthcare guidelines now call for including a potent protease inhibitor as part of combination treatments to fight HIV. Consider these reasons to make the protease inhibitor CRIXIVAN the foundation of your treatment regimen.

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 -T cell count. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

New NIH research showed people taking CRIXIVAN in triple therapy lived longer and experienced fewer opportunistic infections.

Recent year-long research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (Protocol ACTG 320) studied over 1,000 patients and confirmed results from another study.

The group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. This reduction was significant enough for the NIH to recommend the study be stopped, so that all participants could benefit from the findings. Because the study was ended early, there was insufficient data to determine the statistical impact of CRIXIVAN on survival.

CRIXIVAN in triple therapy continues to hold serum viral load down below the limit of detection at the one year mark.

In a separate, ongoing landmark study, over 90% of the 31 patients receiving CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their HIV serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks (as measured by available tests; the virus may still be present in other organ systems).

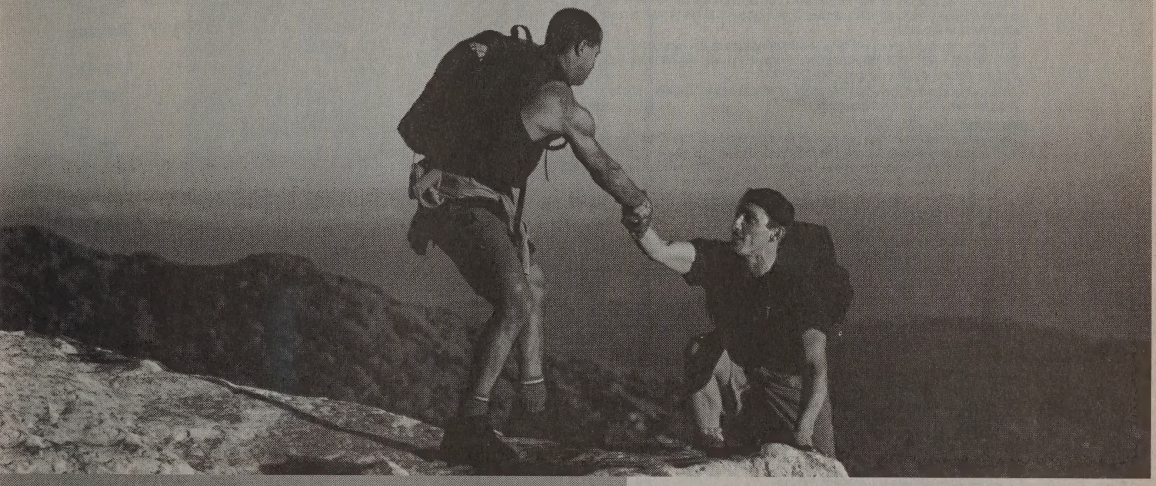
Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one year mark.

CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated.

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. There are side effects associated with protease inhibitors in general and CRIXIVAN in particular. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems. There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

As with other protease inhibitors, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Please read the following page for detailed information on side effects and dosing.

CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.



CRIXIVAN is the number one choice of doctors.*

CRIXIVAN is prescribed for more patients than any other protease inhibitor. With this commitment to CRIXIVAN comes a commitment to product improvements and further research in the battle against HIV. CRIXIVAN is being studied in a broad range of patients and in many different combinations. Ask your doctor for the latest news and developments.

* IMS America; 3/96 - 2/98.

Focus on the rest of your life.

Learn all you can about HIV therapy. Talk with your doctor. Stay informed and stay the course. With viral load below the limit of detection and an increase in CD4 T-cells, it's easier to look forward to the future with confidence.

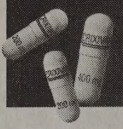
Please read the following page for more detailed information about CRIXIVAN.

Remember to ask your doctor about CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Going the distance.

MERCK www.crixivan.com



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(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)
for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, you should read the information included with CRIXIVAN each time you receive your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this information does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays." If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:
   - dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   - corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?**

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Isoniazid (INH)
DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)	ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)

BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXIVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this page alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

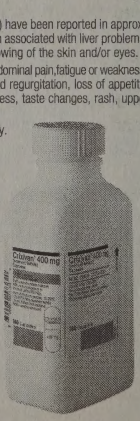
Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain,fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: abdominal swelling; inflammation of the kidneys; increased fat appearing in areas such as the neck, abdomen, and back; change in skin color; severe skin reactions; hair loss; crystals in the urine; and allergic reactions.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.



How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°F-86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication is prescribed for a particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

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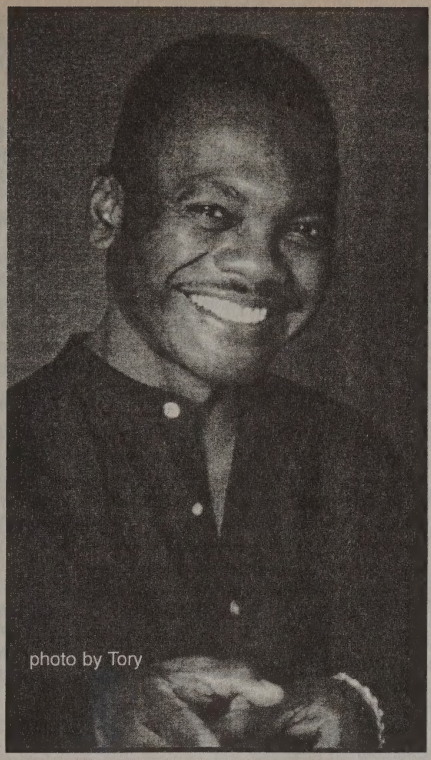

As I prepare to head out to the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum in Atlanta, I am reminded of the political status that we bare and enjoy as same gender women and men.

I am also reminded of my mother's womb from whence I come. I am reminded of, not only the love and respect and affection delivered to me constantly by my 3 nurturing brothers and my late and desperately missed father, but I am reminded of the strength and support that I am constantly given by my wise and worshipful mother and my incredible 4 sisters.

The world is indeed about women and men. I am a better man because of the women I know. I am a better homosexual man because of the homosexual women I know.

Once we remove the actual sex act from our agenda and concentrate on the right---the clear human right---to the enjoyment of our sexual nature, then we cross that great divide.

When was the last time you, my same gender loving brother, sat down to talk to your same gender loving sister? When, my same gender loving sister, did you take the time to sit down and talk to your same gender loving brother? Hey, I'm as guilty as everybody else.

If indeed agape' love is the highest form of love, then the highest form of love is not about dick, ass and pussy. It's about heart. It's about what it is.

It's about the God in you that has enough diverse love for everybody. So if he can share, why can't we?

Stanley Bennett Clay

SBC

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LETTERS

IN THE MATTER OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Perhaps black gays should be told that they do not particularly need acceptance by the Homophobic Black community{Sept/Oct '98 Vol. 7 Issue 3]. Have you taken a good look at who you are asking acceptance from? The majority. Perhaps black gays should redirect those energies to create traditions and culture amongst themselves which can be the envy of the world. Many gays appear to be especially sensitive and creative. Many continue to chase after an indifferent world. Force it to chase after you. Simply create your Think Tanks, your customs, your culture & be the best (and we're not talking about sissy, punk, fag culture here)! People will be more than willing [and] honored to walk with you if you can create the good. You'll need not ask & certainly not beg them.

Leonardo DaVinci Evans
San Diego, California

SOBRINA SOJOURNER AND D.C. EMPOWERMENT

It's true, as the saying goes, that good things come to those who wait. I really liked the [Sept/Oct '98 Vol 7. Issue 3] issue of SBC. I enjoyed the interview with the brothers in Detroit a great deal. And being a fourth generation Washingtonian, the article about Sabrina Sojourner and D.C. empowerment touched a nerve. When I was growing up, you could not physically vote in the District. To vote, it was necessary to go to a voting place in either Maryland or Virginia. That changed with "Home Rule," but the people in the "Big House" (Congress) have been very fastidious about keeping their thumb on Washington. It's an old wives tale in Washington that the government purposely encouraged a Black majority there at the turn of the century when there was a wave of European immigration. Washington had been burnt to the ground once by white men who spoke English (during the War of 1812). The prospect of ever having a Trojan Horse in Washington has always worried the government. Being a Washingtonian is the only time being Black is synonymous with being an American. But despite our unwitting participation in a plan to help keep the capital safe, we Washingtonians still do not have the same rights as other Americans.

Aubrey McCoy
Los Angeles, California

SO MUCH TO BE PROUD OF

I had to write you and let you know how much I enjoyed the Jan/Feb ['99] issue of SBC. I read if from cover to cover (which really isn't unusual because I normally do), and found so much to be proud of in our Black SGL community.

First, the article on Bongane Nyathi. I saw this brother at the Malibu beach party this summer, and I must agree with G.B. Mann, there is "something just behind the eyes". After reading the article I got a sense of what that something was: an incredibly strong spirit. I was too young to really understand segregation in this country, however, when Apartheid came to worldwide attention in the 80's I would see the news coverage on how our African family was being treated in their own country!...and I thought 'Oh Hell No!' So to see a brother who has come through that go on to not only win three medals in the Gay Games, but to also encourage Africans in America to become aware of and involved in the Pan-African movement really inspired me. You go boy!

Next, the articles by/about Cleo Manago and Rev. Freda Laniox. I have known and worked with both of them over the years and am so happy to see them getting the national exposure that they so rightly deserve. I always read Cleo's articles and always find them thought provoking. My brother always says exactly what he feels, and though we may not always agree, he always has my love and support. Rev. Freda, I have watched her go through and grow so much! Through the coming out process with her children, through the process of becoming a minister, and now the pastor of Unity Fellowship/L.A.! Work Freda! Hopefully your words will reach the hearts (and checkbooks) of some of our more affluent members of the community.

Thirdly, the article on our up and coming generation. For years I have been telling people that this new generation has the potential to change the world, and this article backed that up. Here are four young people who early on have decided to claim their freedom to be who and what they are. Some of these kids (no offense, but I do have 12 years on ya'll) came out in high school. High school, can you imagine? There was no way I even thought about coming out in high school. Now college, that's another talk show. Anyway, my young brothers and sisters, I'm proud of you! I encourage and challenge you to keep growing and striving, and in the words of Bishop Carl Bean, "Children, don't let nobody steal your joy!"

Parnell D. Marcano
Los Angeles, California

IN RESPONSE TO HATE CRIMES

I'm responding to Mr. Cleo Manago's article "Hate Crimes: Who Gives a Damn? Who?" [SBC Vol. 8 Issue I]. Before reading the article I too have had similar thoughts as to why Matt Sheppard is the poster child of the (white) gay/lesbian community.

I'm from Georgia, South of Atlanta, where direct or indirect discrimination toward black men is as common as drinking a beverage. That being the case I make it a point to be vocal and active being black and gay. There was a time when I embraced self-hate which displayed itself in my social life. But within the past 5 years I've had to do some heavy re-programming which resulted in fuller and more enriched experiences and friendships. I appreciate hearing Mr. Manago's literary voice. I find it very clear and sound on the discrimination issue. Myself? I'm tired of the (white) gay/lesbian community ignoring not only brutal torture but indirect participation in discrimination against minorities for being gay/lesbian and/or expressions thereof.

Demetrius Thurman
Bronx, New York

[We gladly welcome your letters. when writing, please inclued your telephone number which will not be printed, but is needed for verification. It is not the policy of SBC to print unverifiable, unsigned or anonymous letters. Some letters may be edited for the purpose of space and/or clarity]

MAXIMIZE YOUR FUTURE

"There is a general sense and feeling in the African-American Community that people won't benefit from a Viatical Settlement. But that is not true. What we really need is someone who knows what they're talking about, and most importantly who we can trust to help us understand how to create financial stability and security.

My teammates and I can answer your questions and show you how to create a better future! Please see Allison Rodman and me at the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum in Atlanta or give us a call."

–Marvin K. Carter

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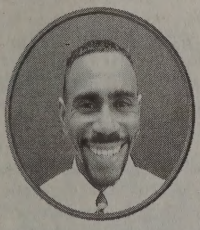

Marvin Carter
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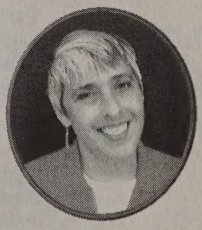

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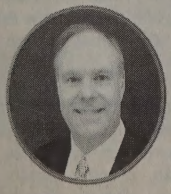

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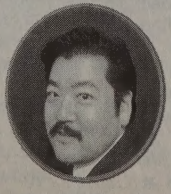

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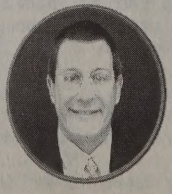

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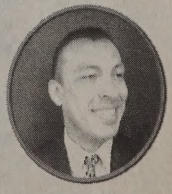

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'THE WEDDING" TO BE LARGEST EVER CELEBRATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Washington, DC -- The world's largest-ever celebration of same-sex marriage will be one of the highlights of the Millennium March on Washington for Equality in April of 2000, one of the world's first human rights marches of the new millennium.

Recent setbacks in the last elections in Alaska and Hawaii have fueled a new emphasis on same-sex marriage rights, according to the Rev. Troy D. Perry, founder and moderator of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). UFMCC is the world's largest and oldest spiritual organization offering positive affirming spirituality to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities.

"The setbacks in the last election were only temporary setbacks in a long journey toward full civil rights for all people," said veteran human rights activist Perry. "We're going to continue to raise the visibility of this issue over the next two years."

As part of that strategy, Perry has announced plans for "The Wedding: Now More Than Ever," a public celebration and blessing of same-sex marriage.

Perry conducted "The Wedding" for 2600 couples at the 1993 March on Washington. That event stands as the largest same-sex wedding celebration in history.

"Based on early response, I anticipate that more than 5000 couples will take part in "The Wedding: Now More Than Ever," said Perry.

"Participants will not only be able to celebrate their love and commitment in a memorable event, but we're going to make a powerful statement to the world and we're going to make history," added Perry.

"The Wedding: Now More Than Ever" will take place in front of the Internal Revenue Service Building in Washington, DC on Saturday, April 29. The event is open to all couples who wish to publicly make their wedding vows or wish to renew their wedding vows.

For a $25 registration fee, couples' names will be registered in a permanent historical archive of "The Wedding: Now More Than Ever" and a limited edition, personalized certificate of participation suitable for framing will be prepared. There is no charge for those who wish to participate without registering for the archive and certificate.

For more information on "The Wedding," or to register on-line for this historic event, visit "The Wedding" website at http://www.ufmcc.com/wedding1.htm.

For additional details, contact UFMCC by e-mail at info@ufmcchq.com, or write to UFMCC, 8704 Santa Monica Boulevard, 2nd Floor, West Hollywood, CA 98869.

TRANSGENDER WOMAN ALLEGES ASSAULT BY NYPD

New York, New York---Two organizations located in New York City are calling for a criminal investigation into an alleged assault on a Bronx family and their neighbors in November of 1998. Nancy Lamont called 911 to assist her transgender daughter, JaLea, on the evening of November 24. After paramedics determined medical assistance was not needed, police officers arrived, and spoke briefly with JaLea's mother. As the officers spotted JeLea, they observed that she was transgender, and pushed their way into the apartment. At this point, Lamont alleges the officer physically attacked and verbally assaulted both her and her daughter, and injured a friend of the family. One officer involved called in an "officer down" alert, which then resulted in the building's being swarmed by police, who then, according to Lamont, used mace on all the occupants, including two small children. Both Lamont and JaLea sustained injuries and required medical attention. Two members of the family and a family friend were arrested and charged with a number of misdemeanors and felonies.

Joo-Hyun Kang of the Audre Lorde Project, a center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit and transgender people of color communities, commented, "NYPD harassment and violence against people of transgender experience and people of color throughout the city has continued unabated.

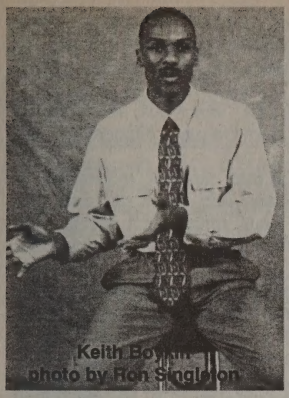
This case shows how the blue wall of violence has become a license to invade people's private homes." For more information, please contact Joo-Hyun Kang (ALP) at (718) 596-0342, extension 10, or Maegan Ortiz (The National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights) at (212) 353-7810.

AUTHOR KEITH BOYKIN CELEBRATES BG SHEROES AND HEROES IN NEW BOOK

New York, New York---Following the success of his critically-acclaimed first book, author Keith Boykin's new book, Respecting the Soul: Daily Reflections for Black Lesbians and Gays, will be released by Avon Books in April 1999.

Respecting The Soul will be the first daily reflections book for the black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community. The book is also targeted toward friends and family members of black lesbians and gays and anyone who is dealing with issues of race or sexual orientation.

Respecting the Soul will be the first book to bring together the wit and wisdom of such diverse black heroes and sheroes as Alvin Ailey, Josephine Baker, James Baldwin, Carl Bean, Mandy Carter, Cheryl Clarke, James Cleveland, Angela Davis, Elias Farajaje-Jones, Peter Gomes, Lorraine Hansberry, James Earl Hardy, E. Lynn Harris, Essex Hemphill,



Nona Hendryx, Marjorie J. Hill, Langston Hughes, Carl Lewis, Little Richard, Audre Lorde, Jackie "Moms" Mabley, Cleo Manago, Nelson Mandela, Huey Newton, Me'Shell Ndege'Ocello, Ken Reeves, RuPaul, Bayard Rustin, Barbara Smith, Billy Strayhorn, Sylvester, Linda Villarosa, Vallerie Wagner, Alice Walker, Perry Watkins, Flip Wilson, Phill Wilson, and many others, including the black and Latino drag queens who launched the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion. The book should be available in stores by March 9, 1999 and will be sold for $10. Boykin will travel on a 17-city author tour to promote the book from March until September 1999.

Boykin's first book, One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America, was a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award and received praise from such publications as the San Francisco Chronicle, SBC, the Boston Globe, and The Advocate. The book was also praised by bestselling author E. Lynn Harris and U.S. Congressman Barney Frank.

Keith Boykin is a graduate of Harvard Law School who served two years in theWhite House as a Special Assistant to President Clinton. He is also the former Executive Director of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum.

Keith, a resident of Washington D.C., has appeared on several national television shows and is a popular lecturer on college campuses and elsewhere.

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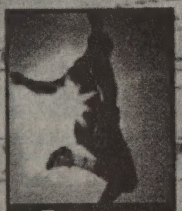

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Brother 2 Brother and the AIDS Prevention Team are programs of the National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum and are funded in part by the County of Los Angeles Office of AIDS Programs and Policy, corporate and private donors and your generous support.

OUT IN AFRICA by S. Predrag, African Correspondent

SOUTH AFRICA ESTABLISHES HISTORIC SAME-SEX COUPLE RULING

Cape Town, South Africa---The Cape High Court established yet another precedent in South Africa by ruling in favor of Franck Joly, a 20-year-old Paris business school graduate, who was finally allowed to join his partner, Hilton Kaplan, a
32-year-old Cape Town plastic surgeon.

Three High Court judges declared deportation orders against gays illegal, and Section 28 of the Aliens Control Act unconstitutional.

It was a historic ruling, allowing the foreign partners of South Africans to settle in this country whose immigration laws discriminated against same-sex couples.

Joly was recently barred from entering South Africa and was even detained in a solitary cell at Cape Town International Airport.

South African immigration authorities threatened Joly with deportation and asked him to pay a 3,000 South African Rand repatriation deposit (around 500 US dollars). However, the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) made an urgent application to have the Aliens Control Act declared unconstitutional.

Judge Dennis Davis and two other judges of the High Court in Cape Town allowed Franck Joly to enter South Africa and the respondents---the Minister of Home Affairs, the Director General of Home Affairs and the Regional Department of Home Affairs---were ordered to pay the costs of the application.

Last year, in Cape Town, a number of South African gay and lesbian partners, including Kaplan and Joly, gave evidence to Parliament's portfolio committee on home affairs, pleading for the Aliens Control Act to be changed. They specifically asked that same-sex and unmarried couples in a committed relationship should be given the same status as spouses.

"For these couples," stated the South African influential daily, The Star, "the possibility of making a home in South Africa and evading the chilling threat of deportation could lie in changing the meaning of a single word."

Namely, the NCGLE insisted that the term "partner" should be included to signify those people who could get an immigration and residence permit. Taught by their earlier battles with the authorities, the NCGLE this time specified that "partner" should mean "a person irrespective of sex, permanently and lawfully resident in the Republic, living together or intending to live together in an intimate and committed domestic partnership."

Their intention was to leave no legal loopholes which would allow for discrimination against homosexuals. They had already had a negative experience in 1998 with Albert Mokoena, the Director-General of Home Affairs, who had stated under oath that he would exempt couples from section 28 of the Aliens Control Act.

During the hearings last December, the Home Affairs Director-General had promised to treat both lesbian and gay applicants with dignity and due consideration.

However, just weeks after that, Franck Jolly was detained at Cape Town airport and asked to pay a deportation fee.

It is a well-known fact that tens of thousands of Mozambicans, Zimbabweans and other nationals are deported each year from South Africa, but it appears that only gays and lesbians are asked to pay a deportation fee.

Immigration officials attempted to explain the inconsistency, hiding behind the rule that it is at their discretion to decide who will pay the deportation fee. But, such an explanation evidently did not impress the three High Court judges in Cape Town and, of course, Zackie Achmat of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality, who described their ruling as a historic precedent for South Africa.

Another precedent was set last year by Judge JP Roux who ruled that police regulations excluding gay and lesbian officers from registering their partners with Polmed (medical aid) were unconstitutional.

In his ruling, Judge Roux said that it was time for South African law to recognize committed gay and lesbian relationships as being no different from those of married couples.

The ruling came after a lesbian police officer in Pretoria filed a lawsuit in the High Court against the police medical aid society, Polmed, for refusing to register her female partner as a dependent.

South Africa is still the only country in Africa whose constitutional court recently declared consensual sexual intercourse between members of the same sex as being no longer unlawful, underlining that a person may not be discriminated against on the ground of his or her sexual orientation.

FORMER ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT SENTENCED FOR HOMOSEXUAL ASSAULT

Harare, Zimbabwe---Zimbabwe's former president, Canaan Banana (63), was sentenced on Monday, January 18 to ten years in jail for homosexual assault. However, the High Court in Harare suspended nine of the ten years under the condition that he pays compensation to some of his numerous victims and does not repeat the same offense during the next three years.

The Methodist minister and father of four adult children was found guilty, among other charges, of two counts of sodomy - one involving his former security aide and soccer player, Jefta Dube, and a job-seeker, Ernest Ngwenya.

Banana, who was President for seven years (since Independence, in April 1980, till 1987) when he committed most of the offenses, was dressed in his traditional Mao-style suit.

He listened to the sentence carefully, he shut his eyes for a moment, while his lawyers immediately announced that they would appeal against the conviction and sentence.

Four years were suspended on the condition that Banana pays Z$500, 000 (about US$12, 000) in compensation to one of his victims, Jefta Dube, and to the family of a fellow policeman whom Dube murdered.

The scandal involving the ex-President erupted in February 1997 during the trial of his former aide Jefta Dube.

At the time, Dube, a soccer player and policeman, was sentenced to 10 years in jail for the 1995 murder of a fellow police officer who tauntingly called him "Banana's wife".

Later, Jefta Dube claimed that he was raped by President Cannan Banana in the State House. The court heard testimony from witnesses such as Banana's cook, gardener, and others with similar experiences and accusations.

Banana rejected all the accusations, saying that there was a "conspiracy" against him. He also appealed to the Harare court, claiming that negative pretrial publicity in the media had prejudiced his right to a fair hearing.

As the story goes, Banana noticed Dube, whose father was a poor gardener with many children, on the soccer field, playing for the Black Mambas, Harare's police team, back in November 1983.

Banana sent his chauffeur to call the handsome Dube, who was only 23 at the time, to come and visit him at the State House the following day.

Dube was offered the job of aide-de-camp to the President, a good salary with the promise of promotion and a secure place on the soccer team.

Only days after accepting the lucrative job at the State House, he received an unexpected call to have dinner with the President and his family.

That night Banana made his first homosexual advances and six months later Dube claims he was raped in the President's library after being drugged first.

Banana escaped the country just days before Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku convicted him, in absentia, of 11 charges of sodomy, attempted sodomy and indecent assault.

He fled from Zimbabwe to neighboring Botswana without a passport, and he later crossed over to South Africa, a country which rejected anti-homosexual laws recently.

About a month ago, Banana returned to Harare where he was put under house arrest until his recent sentencing.

The government-controlled media in Harare claimed that Banana had come back to "face justice."

However, it appears that his return was a part of a deal brokered by South African President Nelson Mandela and his Zimbabwean counterpart, Robert Mugabe.

Mandela told journalists that he had reached an agreement with Mugabe on "a common position" on the issue of Banana, but he evaded all questions on this agreement, refusing to disclose what it entailed.

It is widely believed that the deal involved the possible pardon of Banana because the influential, pro-government daily, The Herald, published an editorial urging media to stop exploiting "this sad case."

The same paper underlined "Comrade Banana's accomplishments in the years of the Independence struggles...and for the unity of the country..."

The Banana scandal shocked and deeply embarrassed President Robert Mugabe, a well-known critic of homosexuals whom he has called "lower than dogs and pigs."

It remains to be seen whether the first President of Zimbabwe will leave his luxury villa in Mount Pleasant, Harare, and replace his elegant suit with a prisoner's garb, even for a much shorter period than one year.

CHURCH AND STUDENTS CLASH OVER HOMOSEXUALS

Gaberone, Botswana---The Church, especially the Catholic church, is usually conservative while students are generally liberal in their opinions on homosexuality.

Well, that is not the case in Botswana, a Southern African country with around a million and half inhabitants, whose neighbors, with the exception of South Africa, have a tough anti-gay stance.

The University of Botswana, in Gaberone, was recently the place of a very heated debate on the proposed relaxation of anti-gay laws.

The main promoter for a better understanding and realistic approach to the issue of gays and lesbians in Botswana was Reverend Rupert Hambira, the head of the Botswana Christian Council, who insisted that homosexuals were God's children too and should not be subjected to other people's prejudices.

"Christians must consider people on humanitarian grounds, regardless of their sexual orientation," he said and added, "We must judge no one, leave it to God."

The Botswana Gazette, a local newspaper, reported that a conservative politician, Tshepo Motswagole, attacked Reverend Hambira, stating that "God made man and said be fruitful and multiply." It follows, according to Mr. Motswagole that, "This is inconsistent with the practice of homosexuality."

The same politician criticized the Reverend for incorrectly interpreting the Bible's principles of Christian tolerance "which did not include acceptance of gays."

During the lively, and, at times, very heated debate, students shouted from the audience that homosexuality was alien to the African way of life and its culture, and was imported from America and Europe, even going so far as to say that it was "imposed by donors."

The Head of the Sociology Department at the University of Botswana, Dr. Mulingi, who was one of the panelists, acting as a moderator of sorts, told the audience that in some countries in Central Africa even married men practice homosexuality.

However, his argument was watered down when he explained that in those circumstances one of the men always took on the male role and the other, the female role. Such relationships were like heterosexual ones, and were therefore not to be criminalized because, he concluded, "Either consciously or subconsciously it is behavior as a man and a woman."

In any case, Dr Mulingi specified that he, as a Catholic, felt that homosexuality was immoral, something that "should not be encouraged in children..." However, he added that it should be up to the mature child to decide for himself.

Finally, Dr Mulingi wanted to show a degree of tolerance by concluding that people were born with homosexual tendencies which society should accept.

(continued on page 17)

VIRACEPT IS POWERFUL It's tough on HIV. In many people, VIRACEPT lowered the amount of HIV in the blood to levels below the limit of detection of the test used, and substantially increased CD4 cell counts after 24 weeks of triple combination therapy. (The clinical significance of changes in viral RNA levels in blood has not been established. The virus may still be present in other organ systems.) **VIRACEPT IS EASY TO LIVE WITH** Take it three times a day with your normal meals or light snacks. **VIRACEPT IS GENERALLY WELL TOLERATED** People treated with VIRACEPT may experience some side effects; the most common is diarrhea of moderate or greater intensity in 20% of people in clinical trials. **VIRACEPT WORKS** It's indicated for the treatment of HIV infection when anti-HIV drug therapy is warranted. It is not yet known whether taking VIRACEPT will help you live longer

WHAT YOUR **PROTEASE INHIBITOR** CAN BE:

or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free **1-888-VIRACEPT** or visit **www.agouron.com**. (Refer to the important information on the next page.)

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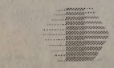

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POWERFUL AND
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VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate

Information for Patients About VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept) Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: if you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:

- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

  Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

  This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

  These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

  If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

- Viramune® (nevirapine)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

  VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

- Crixivan® (indinavir)

  The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

  The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight Kg	Body Weight Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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(continued from page 15)

Reverend Hambira, who is considered a candidate for a parliamentary seat in the forthcoming elections replied to some of his critics by saying that even the Bible was "tinted with human errors and subjective opinions."

Analysts were surprised when the Botswana Gazette not only freely reported on the debate, but also published its own editorial piece, praising Reverend Hambira for his bravery and outspokenness.

"We applaud the courage displayed by the Reverend Rupert Hambira in vigorously taking a stand ...which called for tolerance towards homosexuality in the society and a relaxation of legislation."

And perhaps most surprisingly, the editorial concluded with the following message to "the so-called Christians in the audience, and those who claimed to be Ministers of religions, we can only draw your attention to Matthew 7:1: "Judge not that ye be not judged."

It has to be noted that Reverend Hambira is not alone because, among others, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace laureate, recently condemned the persecution of homosexuals as the moral equivalent of apartheid.

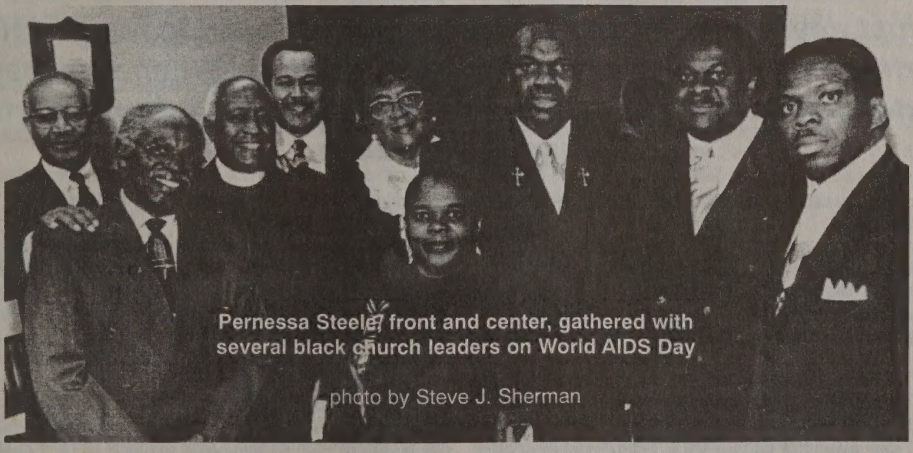
Speaking at a Youth Conference in Denver, Colorado, Archbishop Tutu said that sexual orientation is just like race in that people are not able to decide as to whether they want to be black or white, homosexual or heterosexual.

"For me it's a matter of human rights," said Tutu who stressed that he believed that "they are as much God's children as anyone else."

WEEK OF PRAYER DEMONSTRATES BLACK CHURCH'S COMMITMENT TO AIDS

by Pernessa C. Steele Founder/CEO The Balm In Gilead

Too often the Black church is accused of being a non-player in the AIDS epidemic. Or worse, it is accused of continuing to contribute to the spread of the virus through denial and by stigmatizing people who are living with HIV/AIDS. AIDS is now the leading cause of death for Black men and women between 25 and 44 years old. Anyone who knows anything about Black people knows that our churches---which nearly 80 percent of us attend regularly---must lead us through the AIDS crises.



Pernessa Steele, front and center, gathered with several black church leaders on World AIDS Day

photo by Steve J. Sherman

And that is exactly what is happening. More and more Black religious leaders are sounding the call for greater attention to be paid to AIDS. Ministers are asking, what would Jesus do in this age of AIDS? Their answer is education and positive action. Through AIDS ministries and care teams, churches are providing AIDS prevention education to their congregation as well as pastoral counseling and direct services to people in their community who are living with the virus. Most importantly, churches are initiating prayer for people whose lives are impacted by HIV/AIDS.

It is very significant that some of the most admired Black religious leaders joined me on World AIDS Day to help launch the 10th anniversary of the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS (March 7-13, 1999). On this historic occasion, ministers came together across denominational lines to provide inspiration and encouragement to Black churches who will have to struggle with the destructive effects of AIDS for decades to come.

Rev. Dr. Johnnie Colemon, Rev. Dr. Robert Franklin, Bishop T.D. Jakes and many other respected leaders have spoken. Churches throughout the nation are affirming their commitment. As we approach the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS we are pleased to know that more churches than ever before will be part of this national movement. On Sunday, March 7, thousands of churches and hundreds of thousands of Black people will become educated about AIDS and collectively will pray for our families and communities to be healed of the devastating impact of the epidemic. Together, our prayers will make a difference, for prayer changes things!

Yes, controversy has stopped some churches from acting. However, regardless of our position on homosexuality, needle exchange, extramarital sex or condom distribution, the alarming AIDS profile of Black America demands that we heed the words of Bishop T.D. Jakes who, on World AIDS Day, said: "Church, there is a way for us to do what needs to be done without violating what we believe."

I urge all concerned Black Americans to contact the Balm In Gilead at 888.225.6243 to find out how they can be part of the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS.

THE SHOT GUN WEDDING OF CHURCH AND STATE:

Dallas, Texas---It's time for our community to take a different approach in opposing conservative Christian activists. Jerry Falwell, James Dobson, Gary Bauer, and even Lou Sheldon ("Traditional Values Coalition") have learned their lessons. We haven't.

We are winning the battle. The American people recognize the justness of our cause. Although conservative Christian activists know this reality, they will never admit it. And, when the general public is listening, they moderate their message. That moisture on their brows is not sweat from the bright lights of the TV studio - it's "compassion" for poor troubled homosexuals oozing from their pores. They make "love the sinner and hate the sin" sound pretty good. Occasionally, they still slip as did Robert Knight of the "Family Research Council" when he recently stated on TV that the real tragedy of Matthew Shepard's death was that Shepard spent his last waking hours "cruising for men in a bar."

But their compassion is intended for public consumption. Behind closed doors conservative Christian activists claim that the overthrow of the United States government by a homosexual cabal and the recruitment of our children into depravity is underway. They instill fear by claiming that God will destroy the United States and that we will all burn in Hell, especially, according to Pat Robertson, if we live in Orlando. They do this because anti-gay demagoguery is their most potent fund raising tool.

We are in danger. If conservative Christian activists go unchallenged, they'll hide their hateful sneers behind the smiling face masks of "compassionate conservative" political candidates and ride the wave to victory in the 2000 elections - just as George W. Bush did this November.

Witness recent events in Texas. The Texas Republican Party refused a booth to the Log Cabin Republicans at the 1998 State Convention. Leaders of the party called the Logs a "hate group" and compared them to Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. When the duly elected gay and lesbian delegates to the convention held a rally outside the convention center, they were shoved and shouted down, by Bible toting conventions delegates carrying the typical "Fags burn in Hell" and "God hats fags" signs. George W. Bush didn't take a stand against the hate. He acted solely to minimize the damage to public relations and to his election campaign. Being a "compassionate conservative" does not mean that one supports equality and justice. It is simply lipstick on a pig -- dressing up the denial of rights to gays and lesbians and the elimination of reproductive freedom with empty rhetoric about "acceptance", "inclusion", and the "big-tent". Lipstick, or not, a pig is still a pig.

Even so, we are now gaining the support of moderate Republicans. More Republicans voted with us in the 105th Congress then ever before. In the recent hate-filled reception the Log Cabin Republicans received at the Texas Republican Convention, the Logs looked like the moderates and the conservative Christian activists looked like hate-filled extremists. The Log Cabin Republicans can't take full credit for this movement in our direction, but, they are a tremendous asset to our community. (I say this as a Texas Democratic Precinct Chairman.)

We can provide a tremendous service for ourselves, the American people, and the moderates in the Republican party. When conservative Christian activists promote their hate-filled agenda in public, or, privately to their own constituencies we can and should hold their organizations accountable. Unfortunately, they often deny their own words. Recently, Jerry Falwell was on "Geraldo, Live". When asked about calling Ellen DeGeneres "Ellen DeGenerate", he denied it. We all know he said this. It was widely reported. And, yet, his denial went unchallenged.

Throwing the light of public scrutiny is effective. When the Republicans broadcast advertisements reminding voters in narrowly targeted districts about President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky the ads helped Republican candidates in those districts. However, when the Democrats nationalized the ads by making sure that every voter in the United States heard about them, the ads backfired and hurt Republican candidates more then they helped.

"We must develop an effective means of nationalizing the private and hateful rhetoric of conservative Christian activists. Whenever they whisper a hateful sneer to their faithful, we should shout it from the rooftops throughout America."

This is what we must do---develop an effective means of nationalizing the private and hateful rhetoric of conservative Christian activists. Whenever they whisper a hateful sneer to their faithful, we should shout it from the rooftops throughout America. When we appear across the table from Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, or Gary Bauer, we should be prepared for battle, sling shot in hand. We must use every opportunity to ask conservative Christian activists about the hate filled diatribes they feed their followers. We must show them the documentation in public so that they cannot deny their words and deeds. (If only our leaders could respond to Jerry Falwell by saying to the audience, "I have one of Jerry's fund-raising letters right here. Let me read it to you. . . I suggest that the audience go to 'WWW.HateExposed.Org' on the Internet and see what else Reverend Falwell has said. Then you can make up your own mind." This is a challenge to our national political organizations to set up a web-site to document these attacks and expose them to the nation.)

But there is another lesson we must learn. Andrew Sullivan and Elizabeth Birch were on the "Larry King Show" recently to discuss the murder of Matthew Shepard. They made the fatal mistake of arguing religion with the good reverend. While I can understand Birch and Sullivan's desire to express their religious beliefs and to contest Falwell's, this discussion was counter-productive. They did not win the argument and they played on Falwell's turf, giving him the opportunity to look caring and compassionate.

CHALLENGING THE WRONGS OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

by GEOFF STAPLES

Our political leaders and activists should never argue religious doctrine with conservative Christian activists. When we argue religion, we concede the validity of the conservative Christian activists' claim that literal Biblical interpretation is an appropriate criterion for evaluating governmental policies and legislation. It isn't and we should never implicitly or explicitly concede this point. Homosexual persons of faith and their allies are successfully working in faith communities for the acceptance of homosexual persons, our families, and relationships. Leave this work to them. This is where it belongs. Religious discussions should take place in religious institutions, not in the political arena. As persons of faith learn more about homosexuals, they become more receptive to our social condition. But this understanding must come from within faith communities. Political pressure only creates resistance.

Take a look at "The Center for Reclaiming America" ads promoting the conversion of homosexuals into heterosexuals through the power of Jesus Christ. On the surface these ads look reasonable to the uninformed. It is the responsibility of our political leaders to dispute the lies and erroneous science, not the theology, contained therein. Every time we argue theology in a political arena, we lose! The religious beliefs of conservative Christian activists are not the issue.

Janet Folger, national director of "The Center for Reclaiming America", is on record stating (on the ABC program "Nightline") that, in addition to converting homosexuals to heterosexuals, she supports laws that would make homosexuality illegal, thereby denying gay and lesbian American citizens the rights and liberties granted all other Americans. This is the real issue. She should be held accountable for her political position, not for her religious beliefs.

Christian conservative political activists won't stop with homosexuals. Somehow they have discovered the biblical position on the minimum wage, health care, social security, the gold standard, membership in the United Nations, immigration, teaching phonics, and bilingual education. For these activists, The Bible is the only valid rulebook for behavior and morality. The Bible trumps everything, including the Constitution of the United States. Sadly, conservative Christian activists have set themselves in opposition to most Americans by their claim that they are on a mission ordained by God and which only they understand. If the rest of us don't believe as they do, conservative Christian activists will still help us by passing laws requiring all Americans to conform to their religious dictates. When we object, we are pitied as lowly sinners, or, accused of religious bigotry for opposing them. Conservative Christian organizations, their leaders, and followers have every right to judge themselves and others by biblical standards. If they want to claim they are the only true Christians, let them. It is their right to selectively emphasize some passages in The Bible while ignoring others. Hypocrisy is not illegal. They have a right to run print and TV ads promoting their world view -- even when that view runs contrary to contemporary scientific research. But the issue we must ponder is this: "Do we want to live in a country in which the conservative Christian interpretation of The Bible is the law of the land?" This issue is of critical importance to all Americans, not just gay and lesbian ones. Turning the United States into a conservative Christian theocracy is the real agenda of Christian conservative activists.

These activists claim that our founders created a Christian nation. But they have misread the history of the United States and the American people. Christianity is part of our heritage and Biblical standards of conduct most certainly shaped our laws and our constitution. But, no matter how fervently conservative Christian activists want it to be the case, the United States is not a Christian Theocracy. In the United States, we respect the rights, beliefs, and liberties of all citizens, regardless of religious beliefs, or lack thereof. We only curtail personal liberty when it interferes with the liberty of others. Having homosexual neighbors does not damage the liberty of conservative Christians. But, the liberty of homosexual Americans is most certainly damaged by the conservative Christian activists' claim that homosexuals are not deserving of the same respect and dignity due every American citizen. American history has been blighted by the denial of rights to African-Americans, women, Native Americans, and Asians (interred during World War II); and by vilifying groups of Americans we didn't like (Jews, Muslims, atheists, Irish, Italians, Germans, gays, Catholics, lawyers, witches, . . .). Americans are not perfect. Occasionally many of us succumb to bigotry and demagoguery. But common sense and fairness have always prevailed.

Many Americans don't realize the threat to democracy the conservative Christian activist agenda presents. But, we in the gay and lesbian community certainly do. Perhaps, we see the danger because we are the current target. (Not long ago African-Americans were targeted. Segregation, slavery, and banning inter-racial marriage, it was claimed, were ordained by God and The Bible.) Perhaps, we see it because we are the only group left in the United States for whom civil rights protections are actually contested. Like the watchman in the lighthouse, it is our duty to ring the bell and alert the American people. The future of our country depends on it. We can only do this by clearly defining the line between religion and public policy. When conservative Christian activists confront us with their Biblically based political agenda, we must resist the temptation to argue religion. When they claim that homosexuals are defective, diseased, or sinful, we must gently remind them that religious beliefs do not have supremacy over civil law, government policy, or our constitution.

"Do we want to live in a country in which the conservative Christian interpretation of The Bible is the law of the land?"

Instead of attacking the religious beliefs of conservative Christian activists, let's hold them accountable for their anti-American political agenda. Let's invite them to join us in protecting our constitution, and the rights and dignity of all persons. If they refuse our invitation, let's love them and pray for them.

Since the beginning of this decade Cedric Whitfield, a native of Dallas, Texas, has been active in HIV/AIDS activism. Volunteer work at the L.A.-based Minority AIDS Project in 1990 was briefly interrupted by a military stint. After service, he returned to Map until a paying job opened up at AIDS Project Los Angeles.

In these past 9 years Whitfield, now 30, has seen a lot of hope and a lot of despair. One of 9 children, he remembers painfully the death of a brother from AIDS a year and a half ago: " That was really traumatic. Although I had lost many friends to HIV, no one in my family had ever died. I had no concept of familial death. My brother was so young and he was not a gay man nor was he an intravenous drug user, he was mentally disturbed and there were a lot of other issues there, but it totally changed my life. After my brother's death I pulled away from the work and really went inside of myself---I quit smoking and I started working on the other parts of myself to become the person that I wanted to be, and I started creating my future instead of living so in the present, I started looking at next year and goal-setting and started deciding what I wanted my tomorrow to look like. I don't think I had ever conceptualized what tomorrow was until my brother died."

But pulling away from the work did not mean abandonment. He currently;y works for The City Of Los Angeles' Public health department in the field of epidemiology, monitoring HIV/AIDS data primarily through a program known as Project Open Window. A passionate man whose work often causes it's own particular pain, Cedric, for the moment, is still very much a soldier on the battlefield with specific ideas about HIV/AIDS and the African American community.

Stanley Bennett Clay: What do you think are the ramifications AIDS has had on your generation?

Cedric Whitfiled: We're generation X'ers and, I maybe overstepping, but Generation X is not very political. How do I think HIV has effected Generation X? We've been able to see a lot of people die, and also been able to see the hope that's come forth through the new protease inhibitors. How has it affected people my age? They and we have lost numerous friends. I think that the generation that will see less death due to HIV is the under 21 year old age group. And I think their perception of HIV will be very different than the current generation.

With the new medicines that are coming on the market it seems that people are getting a little lax when it comes to safer sex practices. Is it because the death penalty has been kind of removed and it's beginning to be looked upon as an illness with a foreseeable cure?

I think that you're partially right. I think that the delusion that many people are under is that people are not dying from HIV any longer and that is simply not true. There are still many people dying from HIV disease. I don't hear about it as often and it kind of startles me when I hear someone has died from it, but I am very aware that people are still dying. It may be because I work in epidemiology and so I kind of see some reporting, but I do believe that people are still dying.

I do believe that people are becoming more lax with safer sex guidelines because maybe it's being seen as a chronic illness and it will not cause death. I guess for me what I would really like people to see are people going into the hospital every 3 months or going into the clinic to get their blood drawn and, you know, having to actually take this incredible number of pills that are not kind to the body and especially may not be kind to the liver. I just wish people could see that. It's not really pleasant. But unfortunately, we don't see this in the news, and the media is not helping as it talks about HIV as being a controllable illness like diabetes. I guess people don't stop to think of diabetes. They forget that many diabetics are having several transfusions, are on dialysis and are having kidney failure. All they see is 'oh, they're living fine' and that's simply not true.

With the new money that President Clinton has earmarked for more awareness in the black community, Can we expect to actually see a change effected? What are your projections on possibly reducing HIV in the black community, if it's possible to even project it.

I tend to be really watchful of numbers. I haven't heard any projections about the extra money the president has made available to community-based organizations in regards to people of color, more specifically African Americans, but also Latinos. I don't know if the money with alter behavioral changes. I don't actually believe that African Americans in Los Angeles County who are men who have sex with men are not knowledgeable around HIV and how to protect themselves. I think there are other more cultural co-factors that are rarely talked about. Do I think the money with effect cultural change? No. Do I think it has the potential to effect behavioral change and to cut down on the number of new infections in the African American community? Definitely.

It seems like awareness tends to at least make safer sex hip and chic. It seems like awareness tends to work because if you look at the larger gay community I think that, in my opinion---and let me know if I'm incorrect on this---that safe sex practices and the consciousness about it seems to be the cool, the hip, the chic thing to be, and because of that, there seems to be a reduction of new infections in the general gay community that has not registered in the black community. Is that correct or is that just an unfounded theory?

I can't say generally whether that's more correct or less correct. For me, I can call it what it is. If white gay men who reside in gay epicenters like West Hollywood are more inclined to have safer sex, then African American men who have sex with men who reside in areas that are not specifically gay---well, let me say it this way. One, I don't think---number one I know that African American men who reside in West Hollywood or who congregate in West Hollywood are probably not having protected sex as often as their white counterparts, so I just don't believe that it's geographical. Two---why is it that there are more white men reporting that they're having protected sex. I think, partially, you're correct, that in white gay communities it is more more accepted, it is more discussed---the rules of protected sex---because there have been guidelines that have been taught to that community since the onset of HIV, since the early 80's. Sex is negotiated. And I don't know if those same kinds of things have been, that same kind of attention has been paid to African Americans, African American men who have sex with men and the African American gay community.

There's another reason for that too that we very rarely discuss, and that is it's easier to target white gay men, it's very easy to get a public health message, or any message, into that community because you have an epicenter that you can target and you know that you're going to have a ripple effect, and I think in people of color communities, people of color same gender loving communities or whatever you want to call it, it's more difficult, not impossible, but certainly more difficult to identify your population and define your population.

CEDRIC WHITFIELD ON HIV: "DON'T TAKE THE GLOVES OFF YET"

by
Stanley Bennett Clay

It seems that in the black community that there is still the belief that AIDS is a gay disease---even though there are so many heterosexual women that are affected (although we know a lot of times it's because of men who are messing around) and other statistics that show otherwise. How do we 'sell' the fact that AIDS is an equal opportunity disease?

I actually believe that in the African American community that's going to probably be one of the ways that we will be able to cut down on new infections, by 'selling' it as a disease that all people can get.

But I want to address a comment you made about women and HIV. And I think that historically, from what I read, that women are the only group that can ever be viewed as victims in the United States and it's not necessarily seen as oppressive, or as a bad thing. I think that we often portray African American women as victims when it comes to HIV, and certainly there have been many women who have been infected unwittingly with HIV by their male companions, but there are a lot of African American women out there who have a history of drug use, and we see a lot of those women in our studies. We have to stop acting like African American women have been victimized by this disease through African American men because I think what it creates is an historic shame for African American men, and that's completely ridiculous in my opinion.

Although many of the cases of HIV infection for African American women has been through heterosexual contact, we also have to look at how many of these women knew the status of their sex partner, how many of these women knew that their sex partners were injection drug users prior to engaging in sex with the individual. So in saying that women are victims, I think it is less true than we like to admit.

Where do you think HIV/AIDS will be in the year 2000, next year?

Gosh, next year? I think the year 2000 will continue to be a hopeful year. It's hard to say. I think that HIV will continue to be a manageable disease. I don't suspect that the protease inhibitors will fail anytime soon, because, again, I have seen many resurrections in the last couple of years, people who were definitely on their death beds come back, but then again I've also seen a lot of people that have already crossed that river, who have died. So I've seen both. I've seen the hope and I've seen the despair.

How do you go on working in this field, seeing so much of despair?

You know, it's interesting because I work in epidemiology now, and I have to really admit that I'm not on the community level that I was on before. I see more numbers and I see more of the people who are in my study than I do people in the general community living with HIV. I mean, I go to community meetings but I really don't see as many people in the later stages of HIV than I used too. It use to really bother me. I don't know if I would have continued working in HIV had I stayed on the community level working directly with community members because it is really, really a disturbing thing when someone comes up to you and tells you that they're losing their mind because they have dementia. It's overwhelming at times.

What did you do before you worked with HIV/AIDS?

I was really young. I was, like doing a lot of things. I was an office manager in Century City, I was doing sales. In fact, I was the top sales person for a furniture company. And I actually loved sale. And frankly, I might go back to sales. I don't ever say that HIV is where I will always be. I know that's not true of me.

Hopefully, on day there won't be a need for anyone to work in it.

Well, I think that even if there is a cure for HIV I doubt that it will work on every individual. I think that there will always be, in my lifetime, a need for their to be some kind of HIV care provision. I don't really know of any vaccine that has worked on 100% of a population. We've got a long way to go before we can take the glove off.

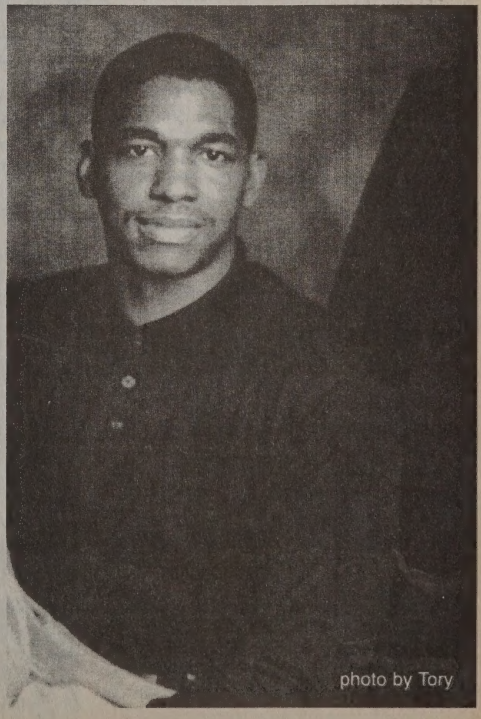


photo by Tory

DEAR SON Part III:

Lenore & Debra

In my last story (SBC Volume 7 Issue 2 July 1998) I ended with this statement, "Love, true love will prevail and the truth will set you free." I am still under the belief system that True Love does indeed prevail, however, as far as the truth setting me free, that's another story! In some instances you feel a sense of inner peace and freedom, but with freedom comes a price. I had to ask myself, is this price too high; in the name of Love and Truth? As my story continues I began to experience "What's Truth Got To Do With It?" and what happened next...

True Love

The fallout from the news of my commitment to Lenore was slow but sure. My small family of four---Lenore, my sons Michael Jr., Maurice, and I---now had to face living with the truth. I felt as though I was caught up in a horror movie where everyone but the lone survivor is killed. I know that the four of us had our own private horrors on a daily basis just living under the same roof. As for me, I somehow thought that once I came out to my boys, everything would fall into place. NOT!!

My relationship with Lenore became very intense and we both withdrew into ourselves. We decided, because coming out to the boys put all of us in this ball of confusion, that we needed to separate for awhile. Neither Lenore or I knew how to deal with the emotional trauma within our home. It was so hard to keep our family together when we ourselves were not. Lenore had past issues in her life that were confronting her, as well as dealing with our family crisis. We believed, at that time in our lives, living apart was the only way we could handle our pain in a healthy, loving way. Although we were miles apart, we were connected spiritually.

We both sought professional counseling. We visited with one another as often as possible. We put our business endeavors aside to concentrate on saving our relationship and our family unit. In retrospect, I felt as though I was suffocating, and each time I attempted to catch my breath, I had less air to breathe. The feeling of anger, hurt, abandonment, and loneliness were overwhelming. I was angry because things didn't fall right into place. I thought that Michael Jr. would show some compassion or at least some degree of understanding, (expectations); more importantly that my eldest would demonstrate his unconditional love for me. That feeling of abandonment stemmed from the separation of my partner and I, giving me the feeling I was in this alone, as well as the lack of connection I was experiencing with Michael Jr. It was like losing my wife and my child all at once! I felt alone because I came out to my sons and a few select friends. I wasn't comfortable talking with anyone about my feelings, so I talked with the driving force in my life. GOD! I continued with my therapy, I wrote in my journal every day, and later shared my journal notes with Lenore.

The Truth

Once Michael Jr. returned to college in Memphis, our relationship was very, very different. See, you have to understand that this is the son who called his mother every day the first two years away at school. Knowing the truth changed that for Michael Jr. because he chose not to communicate with me at all. When he did call me, the conversation was cold and distant, and this cut like a knife! When I came out to Michael Jr. I believe he confided in his girlfriend Christel. She and I had developed a close relationship over the past year. She also decided to distance herself from me.

I found myself getting angry and resentful with Michael Jr. for not having the maturity to deal with the whole situation, for not loving me regardless of my lifestyle. It was that moment of clarity which made the decision for me not to allow his behavior to have power over my emotional well being. It was time to cut the proverbial cord and move forward. Although I love him with every ounce

A MOTHER'S COMING OUT STORY

"WHAT'S TRUTH GOT TO DO WITH IT"

by Debra A. Rodgers

of my soul, I had to live my life and be okay with it.

Not too long after making this decision, I was lying in my bed one Sunday morning and had an overwhelming sense that something was wrong with Michael Jr. I contacted Christel. When she answered and recognized my voice she began to sob. I allowed her to experience her pain. When she was able to speak she informed me that she and Michael Jr. were breaking up. I knew Michael Jr. was in a lot of pain because he really loved Christel. I gave Christel motherly advice. We talked for about an hour. Before she hung up, she thanked me and told me she loved me.

I bought Michael Jr. a card; one of encouragement and support. In the card I expressed the importance of focusing on Love, Trust, and Faith. I felt my son needed me, but would not reach out to express his pain.

I heard from Michael Jr. a few days after I mailed his card. The conversation was strained. We listened to the sound of the voice we needed to hear; the calmness, caring, and love that allowed us the reassurance everything would be alright. What was said didn't matter. It was the silence that made the difference.

Freedom

My youngest son, Maurice, is the one who was truly free. Maurice remained balanced during all the chaos; he was there for all of us. His love, support, and understanding will always be dear to me. In many ways, Maurice has always been more mature than Michael Jr. I am not speaking only of this particular instance, but in other circumstances where he has been in a situation in which his maturity level has brought him and his peers through trying times. Maurice was there for his brother during this coming out process. I recall hearing Maurice and Michael Jr. on the telephone. Maurice would say, "I feel you, man. I feel you!" I believe he felt us all.

Maurice continued to amaze me by being the rock. He would feel my sadness and would instinctively be there for me. He would ask me if I was alright, did I need anything, and did I want to talk about what was on my mind. There were times in which he would not say a word. He would simply come over and hug me or rub my shoulders. Maurice held me in his arms when I broke down in tears because of Michael Jr.'s response to my coming out. Maurice assisted with keeping the lines of communication open between Lenore and me by asking had I spoken with her today and when was she coming back home? Lenore and Maurice had their own ways of communicating as well. She wrote to him regularly as well as called him a couple of times a week. The two of them have a very special bond. Lenore refers to Maurice as her baby, all 6 feet of him.

Maurice has had a lot to contend with over the past three years, dealing with being displaced from his father's home, changing schools at an important time of his life, moving from suburbia to the hood, establishing new relationships, moving from the hood to the mountains (literally), and establishing new relationships once again. Finding out I was a same gender loving woman could have been the straw to break the camel's back. It wasn't! I believe all of this made Moe (his nickname) stronger and more determined. He certainly rose to the occasion---maintaining a 3.0 G.P.A., making the basketball team, and assisting with household chores.

I mention the support around the house because Moe is not domestic at all, but somehow he stepped outside of himself to do whatever it took to assist his mom. There were times when I was genuinely concerned if it was all too much for him. I monitored him closely, looking for signs of anything out of the norm. I even asked if he needed to talk to a therapist. He smiled and asked 'why? This is all a part of life and we just have to deal with it.' I agreed with him. And that's exactly what we're doing!

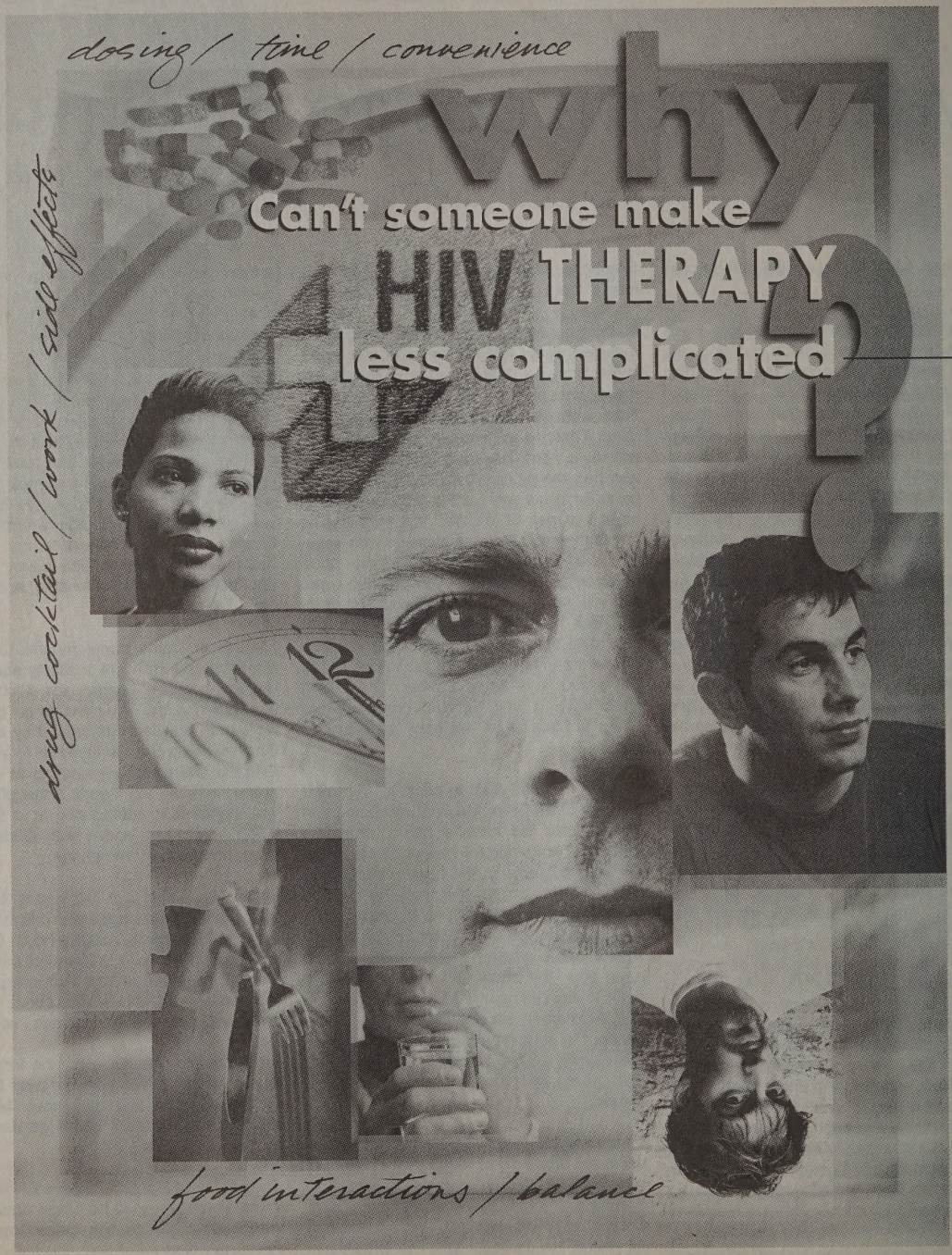
Lenore and I are still seeing a therapist. We are still a committed couple. The pain that Lenore has suffered is as real and traumatic as mine. We take each day as it comes, stay spiritually focused, and love one another unconditionally. We are, by no means, where we need to be in this relationship. Where we are now is very good and where we are headed is great. I believe in my heart of hearts that we are indeed meant for one another, that we are soul mates, and that we have True Love.

Michael Jr. came home for the Christmas Holidays and we were a family again. The tension between Lenore and Michael has diminished a bit. They exchange gifts and were both pleased with what they received. On New Years Eve Christel flew in from New Orleans and I had a gathering at our new home for family and friends. Although Lenore was not able to attend due to a business commitment, she spoke with Christel, the boys, and me over the phone.

I know Michael Jr. is still struggling, but I also know he is trying to cope with this in a loving manner. I believe he realizes no matter what my sexual lifestyle is, I have not changed; I am still the same mother I've always been; the same mom who works, cooks, cleans, yells, and gives lots of hugs and kisses.

After meeting Christel in person for the first time, and interacting with her over the holidays, I believe she only sees Michael's mother, not Michael's same gender loving mother.

The path is still long, but I have FAITH, and I know, in time, we will be whole again. Is it worth it? YES! Is the price too high? Absolutely Not! What does the truth have to do with it? EVERYTHING!


dosing / time / convenience
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food interactions / balance
why
Can't someone make
HIV THERAPY
less complicated
?

someone just did!

Once Daily

SUSTIVA™

efavirenz

New SUSTIVA™ is the first HIV drug approved to be taken once-a-day as part of your combination therapy. Just take three 200 mg capsules together once daily, with or without food; high fat meals should be avoided. Your doctor may suggest taking SUSTIVA at bedtime to reduce any side effects you may experience.

SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

New For HIV

Finally, a once daily medication to treat HIV.

SUSTIVA. It's about time.

www.sustiva.com

*NNRTI - non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor.

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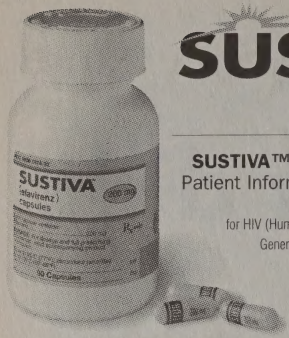

Once Daily

SUSTIVA™

efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA*

(sus-TEE-vah)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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OUT IN HOLLYWOOD

by Stanley Bennett Clay

Hollywood and homosexuality go hand in hand. Always have, and I suspect, always will. Add to this Hollywood's on again/off again romance with African American artistry, political passion, savor faire and sexual mythology then one begins to see why this tiny principality of immense influence and cultural dictation known as tinsel town fancies itself that fantasy island poets say no man is, but pragmatic sensibility identifies as the fat baby on a binge dolled up in benevolent awareness.

Hollywood is the classic oxymoron, at once in a state of grace and a state of denial. Wanting it's cake and eating it too, yet vomiting up the very thing it craves most, the spoiled and privileged little darling vacillating between charm and childish chicanery, blowing kisses and kicking shins all at the same time.

From Rudolph Valentino to Rock Hudson, gay hunks in 'straight' heart throb drag have kept the movie industry afloat while 70's black film makers Melvin Van Peebles' sweet sweetback's baaad aaaass and Gordon Park's phallic incarnate, Richard Roundtree (who more than a few wanted the 'Shaft' from) were liberally blaxploited in a successful maneuver to save the glittered plantation from insolvency.

Nothing's much changed as far as how this oh-so-liberal industry does business or shows gratitude to those groups who have more than once saved its celluloid ass, and for the most part, the industry can't be blamed. Homosexual self hate more than studio oppression kept most of the 'queens' of the silver screen in the closet, getting the girl in Technicolor and Cinemascope while in the dark of their shade drawn bedrooms they moaned and whimpered and beat their meat to the dizzying visions of the boy next door. Still do.

Too many grin-and-bear-it 'thank you's' for crumbs off a table filled to decadent abundance by black screen slaves of the 70's , whose initial input put food on the table in the first place, allowed the white boys in the front office to liberally indulge their guilt-letting fantasies of being gloriously used and abused by blue-black savages with bigger dicks, badder brims and better dance steps.

Nat Turner lives! Or, shall we say, lived back in the 70's; re-invented by 'whitey' in two dozen 'get whitey' films, garbed in black leather and swinging a bull whip, reversing the slave-master roles and delivering a fierce game of bondage played to the lusty hilt.

Only in Hollywood.

Which brings us to Hollywood of today. Hollywood has finally gone public with it's homosexual self. And it's about damn time. From billionaire producer David Geffen on down, the openly gay leaders of this mighty industry have allowed their true selves to ease onto movie and TV screens with an admirable regularity and a new sense of normalcy. Black homosexual characters, while still scarce, are beginning to appear on shows as diverse as Moesha and Spin City. Even former Shaft star Richard Roundtree guest starred on a segment of Roc as a gay man who caused more controversy by announcing his intention to marry his white lover than with the revelation of his sexual nature.

While do-rag comics and closeted rappers, often afraid of their own desires and inadequacies, still gay bash like so many pimpled high school jocks circle-jerking in the locker room, the more enlightened artists and patrons are becoming more comfortable with what they're portraying and with what they're watching respectively. More importantly, the background players, the real movers and shakers, the writers and directors and producers and agents---both black and white---are living their homosexual lives with a new openness that has caused more than a few to term Hollywood's head honchos the lavender mafia.

Homophobes beware!

In my opinion, being out in Hollywood is a no brainer. Being black and out in Hollywood is a little more complicated. Or is it? I certainly recall my days as an actor. With more than 200 starring and guest starring and featured roles on TV and the movies under my belt, glowing reviews and an NAACP Best Actor Image Award on my shelf, I suddenly found myself out of work when it was discovered that I was not only homosexual but living with my lover of 6 years whom I'd married in a full church ceremony. That was 20 years ago. And despite the consequences, I have no regrets. I suspect it's a lot different today. I certainly hope so.

There is a great valley of opportunity between gay-respectful filmmaker Spike Lee and the offending adolescent shenanigans of The Wayans. Even at this writing Kenny 'Babyface' Edmonds is executive-producing a film called Punks which is written, directed and co-produced by openly homosexual African American Patrick-Ian Polk. Producer-writer Tina Andrews, the heterosexual formerly known as fag hag, whose currently preparing the 4 hour miniseries "The Sally Hemmings Story" for CBS, has actively recruited the services of same gender loving artist throughout her illustrious career. And this is just the tip of the ice burg.

It may be too soon to tell what all this means, being black and out in today's, Hollywood. So in an attempt to get some understanding, I spoke with four African Americans who toil behind the scenes and in front of the cameras in the business of show and tell. Their interviews follow.

EMMY AWARD-WINNING PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

PARIS BARCLAY

Only one man has directed a hit feature film, and one of HBO's most popular movies, and produces and directs one of the most acclaimed shows on network television. That one man also happens to be African American and fiercely open about his homosexuality. After achieving success writing and directing commercials, creating award-winning music videos and composing off-Broadway musicals---he's waiting to hear whether he'll get the gig of composing the score for the upcoming Broadway version of *The Color Purple*--- 42 year old Paris Barclay, a native of Harvey, Illinois and Harvard graduate, has broken new ground..

"I realized I empowered people to make [my homosexuality] an issue by not being open about it,' he said, after facing homophobia while directing the parody film *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood*, " So I said from now on I'm not going to do this. If I'm open about it, it can never be an issue. The people who are homophobic or feel that's important to know, will not ask me for jobs."

Rich, powerful and highly influential among the power brokers of Hollywood, Barclay, who recently ended an 8 year personal relationship, has made his work his lover. His creativity as Supervising Producer and Director of the ABC series *NYPD Blue* paid off big recently with an Emmy Award (Outstanding Directing in a Drama Series for last season's 90-minute "Lost Israel Part 2" episode). He's also directed numerous episodes of *ER, Clueless, Moon Over Miami, Brooklyn South,* and *Diagnosis: Murder*, plus the HBO adaptation of Maya Angalou's short story *The Reunion* for executive producer Danny Glover. In the video world he's directed Bob Dylan, Barry White, Vesta, Janet Jackson, Luther Vandross, New Kids On The Block and L.L. Cool J, to name a few.

During a lunch break from directing a recent episode of *NYPD Blue*, I had the chance to talk to the sizzling hot, in demand helmer. His pragmatic view of life on the inside of Hollywood and on the outside of the closet are most revealing.

Stanley Bennett Clay: When did you first realize you were homosexual?

Paris Barclay: I realized I was homosexual many, many years ago in grade school, but it wasn't quite as simple as 'realizing I was homosexual'. I realized that I was sexual and I really didn't differentiate too much, and that was very confusing to me because I was attracted to women, I was attracted to men. I didn't understand what the big deal was, and that evolved into principally being attracted to men, but not exclusively, so when I read the Kinsey Report, I got the first relief from all those feelings because Kinsey sort of said that people are on a scale from 0 to 6. And it's not always so black and white. So I said 'Oh, wow! So that's what's going on with me. I'm not totally crazy', ---and we have to get back to this too because this is my theory of why actors don't come out. I think that actors are somewhat in between. It's the 1 and 6, because part of being an actor is being sensitive and being open, and a lot of times that leads you to be attracted to and attractive to all kinds of different people. Sometimes you're gay and sometimes you're not and sometimes you're largely gay but somewhat heterosexual and sometimes you're largely heterosexual but somewhat gay, and it's all too confusing. If you ever come out with something that's gay then that's what you are. You are gay. And that's a real problem. I mean, I think there are a couple of big stars right now who I think are primarily but not exclusively gay, and they just don't want to be labeled as 'gay'. It's not so much that they hate being gay, they just think that it limits who they are. It's really interesting.

As an African American, I'm sure you've seen the reports that our community tends to be more conservative in regards to homosexuality. What's your opinion on that?

I think it's a natural thing for the African American community and also actually the Latino community to be more protective of essentially propagating the race. I mean, we feel as African Americans that anything that actually makes us look 'bad'---and that's in quotes---is dangerous because there's enough oppression already. There are enough people already looking down their noses at us, there's enough judgment, there's enough intolerance, that if we add to it---and especially if we add to it with things that we can seem to be able to control like peoples' sexuality, then we should try to put the best face on our race as possible. It's one of the things that really infuriates me. It's one of the things that makes people resist any kind of edgy artistic expression of the real African American experience because they think it's going to make all of us look bad. I think that's been part of it. I think as long as homosexuality is considered taboo in society which, by and large, it is, that African American people will resist members of our race being labeled as such, as if we could change it.

What I find interesting is that homosexuals have been able to operate very comfortably in the African American community in years previous. It seems that we are digressing. It seems that we've become more homophobic with time. Is it because our newer higher pro-

file? I mean, when we were just African Americans who were oppressed we accepted all members of our community.

That's really an interesting thought.Yes. I think it may have something to do with the fact that we are more high profile, but it also has to do with the fact that society is becoming increasingly intolerant of difference. I thought 'Oh look, we're reaching an age when everyone is free and we're more accepted'. But the more I look at the world the more I think we're actually regressing. Hate crimes in New York are up 81% and I don't think that's just reporting. I think it's becoming more and more okay to beat people up side the head for being black or gay and I think a lot of that has been the rise of the Christian Right which has its own influence in the Christian churches of the black community, I know this from my own brothers and sisters, has also help to propagate the spirit of intolerance of difference. Here we are in the '90's and you would have thought we would have reached the promise land, but I think we're back to about 1957 in terms of where the tolerance level really is. It's just not as overt because we can still go to the same bathrooms, but the hatred is seething underneath that.

Do you think that there is a need for a new Africentric Homosexual militancy?

I don't know if a militant approach in the traditional sense is the best way to go about it. I'll tell you without playing all my cards. My approach has been more to insinuate myself into influential artistic vehicles and to figure out ways to express the things I believe in entertainment. That's why I talked about in the L.A. Times article my desire to actually run a

television show. Television shows are very influential, and I think they can be a lot more influential than people know right now. When 20-25 million people watch *NYPD Blue* on a night, they're learning things they don't even know about. When 1 in 6 Americans watch *ER* on a Thursday night and they see a woman of color dealing with HIV and working and going through what she does, they're learning stuff that's changing the way they look at the world, because here is someone that they care about that is struggling and, at the same time, surviving. So my goal is to, rather than to be overtly militant---"We got to change the system! We got to beat down walls!"---I want to kind of create dramas that will insinuate my philosophies into the popular consciousness, as Norman Lear (creator/producer of *"All In The Family", "Maude", "Good Times" and "The Jeffersons"*)has done in the past; present my own personal viewpoint. I mean David E. Kelly (creator of *Alley McBeal, The Practice*) is doing it right now with all his shows. All of his shows espouse not too secretly a very liberal point of view.

You brought up the Religious Right. It seems that what they've done is virtually destroy the arts in America. We've returned to almost a medieval attitude toward art. There is no art. I always thought that art was the definition of civilization. The funding of the arts programs in America has disappeared. What do we need to do about this?

Well, I must disagree in a way, that art is disappearing just because government is not funding it. This is somewhat controversial but I think it's a good thing. I think this not for the traditional reason because I don't think the government should be in the business of doing art where people are urinating on Jesus or anything like that. I think what's happening is that art will continue to be made in whatever form it's going to be made. It cannot be stopped, it cannot be stifled. People will paint, people will sing, people will write. People will find ways to express themselves no matter what. By not funding the arts or by having the traditional governmental support turn it's back on it I think will fuel peoples' original expression that will have the opposite effect of what [art funding opponents] want. It's like every time you elect a reactionary asshole like Reagan there's going to be some kind of counter balance in time. People look at that and yes he wins, and he wins another election, but throughout the country there's this other thing that starts brewing that gives you a Clinton. There's always a response, and I think that sometimes the response is worth the pain of the original rejection as it were. So I think the rejection of the funding for the arts makes people dive deeper into themselves, find more unique ways to express themselves or also turn to the more commercial avenues available to them such as television and creating independent films and making music videos and things like that, things they do for pay but at the same time they can express their artistic desires and needs. All in all, I think it's all good.

When you look at America---

(laughing) Don't make me look at America---

---TV is where America gets it's information. What is your take on how America will accept same gender loving people on television.

Well, they're going to, and they're just going to have to get over it. But they're not ready right now. They're not ready to accept intimate relationships between same gender loving people as you say, but we're working on it. We'll just have to find a way to insinuate that idea into their consciousness. And the key will be when they find somebody they love falls in love with somebody else they care about. The reason why the Gloria Reuben character works so well on *ER* is because people find her so vulnerable and they love her so much that they're really concerned about everything that happens with her. I think the same kind of gay male---preferably black---character has to be treated in television in much the same way, and when that character falls in love, he'll bring the audience with him.

Is there a possibility that a gay male---preferably black---will appear on *NYPD Blue?*

Oh, gay males---preferably black---have already appeared on *NYPD Blue*, but do you mean as a recurring character?

Mm--hmm.

"When 20-25 million people watch NYPD Blue on a night, they're learning things they don't even know about. When 1 in 6 Americans watch ER on a Thursday night and they see a woman of color dealing with HIV and working and going through what she does, they're learning stuff that's changing the way they look at the world"

I think it's more likely to happen in the next Steven Bochco show. In the next Steven Bochco show---and I think Steven has already announced this---we're looking at developing a show that has a primarily black cast, and that will have a greater room for that type of character I hope. I know I'm going to get a lot of resume's based on saying that, but don't send them yet. Wait for another year.

Politically and artistically, what's your next move?

The thing that excites me most---and I don't know if by the time this article comes out it will be resolved---there's the HBO project called *The Children* which is based on David Halvistan's book about Diane Ashe, John Lewis, Jim Moss, and how the Civil Rights Movement sort of came together in a meeting of the minds in Nashville and the non-violent protest idea sort of insinuated itself into the hearts of all these kids who eventually became leaders of the Civil Rights movement. So it's really about 1961 to 1965. It's a wonderful, wonderful book that's going to be a 6 hour miniseries for HBO. And I'd love to do it. I don't know if I'm going to be able to because of the timing of it and my commitment to do the show, but that's the most excit-

"If you're a gay man who happens to be writing comedies or dramatic teleplays or action screenplays I think it's fascinating and most of the people you'll be working with will find it extremely intriguing that you're homosexual and you should use it to the hilt. If you're a director and you're gay, I think it's a plus. Because women will feel comfortable with you and most men think that's kind of interesting and aren't offended or fearful of you---some will be---I mean, you probably won't get to do anything with Arnold Schwarzenegger right away."

ing project that I'm looking at right now.

You know, America seems to be an interesting thing. We have black America and we have white America. We have black gay America and we have white gay America. There's a big problem that seems to exist in the fact that black gay America seems to feel that it's left out of this whole movement even though white gay America is using the black Civil Rights movement to advance its agenda, and black gay America seems to be completely left out. We see no images of us in what is called the gay mainstream. What is your take on this.

I Think that's another really interesting question. A couple of years ago, maybe 3 years ago, I wrote a screenplay about a black man living with AIDS who's trying to marry his sister off to his doctor basically. I haven't been able to get a studio to look at it right now even though a number of films about various gay people---various white people with AIDS, Tom Hanks won an Oscar playing one and all that stuff---get made.There just doesn't seem to be that kind of interest, and of course we went to gay white producers as well and hoping that there would be some sensitivity to the fact that there is an inequity going on here, and not only that, there's a really good story going on here, but there's a different agenda between the white gay male population and the black gay male population and they seem right now to be mutually exclusive instead of cooperative. I think you're absolutely right when you say the white gay male today has sort of co-opted the techniques of the Civil Rights movement for their own advancement and I think there's only a nominal concern with bringing blacks along with it. There's no real feeling of inclusion. It's just like 'let's get ours and then just hope for the best.'. To me, it's really sad.

Do you think that it will end up being the same situation that happened with the Women's movement? They used black women to advance their agenda only to dismiss black women once they sort of achieved their goal?

I hope that won't be the case, but if I had to put money on it today, I would say it would end up the same way.

There is talk that there is a gay mafia in Hollywood. Does it exist?

Yep.

That's a succinct answer.

I'm not a part of it.

Okay, but it does exist.

Oh absolutely.

If someone homosexual wanted to be in the industry, is it better to be out or to be closeted?

It depends on what they want to do. If you want to be an actor---and I hate to say it---you better stay in the closet as long as you can. And it's not so much that you won't have opportunities, but you won't even know if you'll have opportunities.Even your agents and managers will shut you down. Right now, until the entire world changes and a couple of really major stars come out as gay men and still have careers right now it's still considered anathema and there's so much fear that it's not going to happen. So if you're an actor, you better keep the door shut, I'm sorry to say. If you're a writer or a director I think you can be whoever you are, particularly if your talents are different or separate from your sexuality. For instance, if you're a gay man and you're always writing gay things, it's expected that you're gay but you'll be extremely limited. If you're a gay man who happens to be writing comedies or dramatic teleplays or action screenplays I think it's fascinating and most of the people you'll be working with will find it extremely intriguing that you're homosexual and you should use it to the hilt. If you're a director and you're gay, I think it's a plus. Because women will feel comfortable with you and most men think that's kind of interesting and aren't offended or fearful of you---some will be---I mean, you probably won't get to do anything with Arnold Schwarzenegger right away.

Is it the sort of George Cukor (Oscar-winning director of the 30's and 40's) syndrome?

Exactly. Most men think you have something on the ball if you're gay. They accept that. I have found a great deal of acceptance from actors to being openly gay. In general they see me as being more sensitive and funnier and have better taste in clothes (laughing) and I pay more attention, and they love having attention paid to them. I mean, I flirt with George Clooney and he loves it and we all live happily ever after.

The fact that you're on *NYPD Blue* as a Supervising Producer and a Director and next year as a Co-Executive Producer---this is such a macho show---

You think so?

You tell me.

I don't think it's so macho. It's extremely sensitive I think it has the patina of machoness that overlays it and it has a certain muscular camera movement, but I

think what's really going on is that it's like this little dysfunctional family where people are busy trying to tell each other how much they love each other in various sort of dysfunctional ways. I mean, Sibowitz (the character played by actor Dennis Franz) , who's the big, burly, homophobic, racist, macho ringleader of this whole enterprise really has the softest underbelly of anyone and cries frequently and is often upset and is generally extremely sensitive. And that's the way he's usually characterized. And even though I disagree with a lot of things he says, the way that we've characterized him is someone who could break at the drop of a hat. And Jimmy Smits was always an extremely sensitive character. He smacked people around but there are scene where he came into the locker room and just sat down and started crying. He just couldn't take it. The pressure of police work was too great. And I love that.

In the L.A. Times article about you, you mentioned something about your work on the Wayans Brothers film---

(wryly) Oh yes, the Wayans Brothers film.

--- *Don't Be A Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice In the Hood* which you directed. I mean, I have my own personal problems with them. In my personal opinion I find them extremely homophobic. When can we get our black comedians out of this pseudo machismo that has to be validated by their put down of same gender loving people?

You know, I don't really know. But I also know that God is good and has a way of balancing these things out as well. And I think---not to specifically sight the Wayans---that there are comedians who miss the point regarding the differences between us and the opportunities for love that those differences provide. And I think, in the great scheme of things, they will eventually be punished. I don't believe that it is my responsibility to punish them. I think vengeance is mine, sayeth The Lord. It's like Eddie Murphy has had his trials and tribulations but has kind of also learned his lesson from experience. I think the Wayans may be in that little period now too where they've really stepped down and now they're learning something about the ramifications.

Do you think some of the homophobia is based on the 'small dick' syndrome?

(laughing) No I don't.

You know I had to ask that.

I think it has to do with black comedians. I think that particular homophobia has to do with the fact that that is the way to bring their audience to them. That is a rallying cry for the homeboy to be against the gayboy. You see that in rap music all the time. I did 7 L.L. Cool J videos and I learned a lot about the strategy of putting down to build yourself up.

Even though they're getting fucked in the ass.

(laughing) Even though there may be, you know, stuff going on. But you can't let people know that. You have to let people know that you're tough enough, that you're man enough. And the way you do that is by putting down the (perceived) weaker. And for me, that's very, very tiresome. But I also know how limiting it is. But I've also seen a lot of people grow up from that, so I have a lot of hope.

Do you think that members of the rap and hip-hop generation will embrace that same gender loving side of themselves.

I think it's unlikely soon. It all comes down to that influential star. I mean, nothing happens without somebody blazing the trail and being successful. I don't see anybody right now on the horizon who is established enough and has the respect of the industry enough to survive their coming out. I do know some artist who are gay and it would be terrific if they did come out, but I don't know of anyone who could come out right now and survive that and keep making records and still be successful. I believe that most of them would lose their base because of the climate of intolerance.

Do you think it's easier for a female to come out as a same gender loving person?

It's always easier for a female to come out. It's just less threatening to the power structure. The structure is men. Lesbians are kind of okay for the straight men. They're entertaining. Straight men kind of wanna watch. 'But men are threatening and scary. Men could actually molest me or my child and have dicks and the whole thing makes me feel very uncomfortable', says the white (straight man). They just don't want to go there. That's why you don't see men kissing on television sitcoms. Women have been kissing a lot for the past two or three years. When I sat down to talk to the studio about *The Normal Heart* (the film adaptation of Larry Kramer's award-winning play about AIDS and homosexuality that Barclay is slated to direct) they said 'are you going to have men kissing in it? Because that is going to limit it's box-office, And we've done all sorts of tests and we did this gay movie and we did this cut---blah-blah-blah--- and we know that that is one thing people won't take. So tell me if you're going to have that in it and we'll decide whether we're going to make the movie.'

Final question. All these young black gay artist out there---

(laughing)Like who?

(laughing) I'm talking about struggling artist. What would you say to them? And be brutally honest.

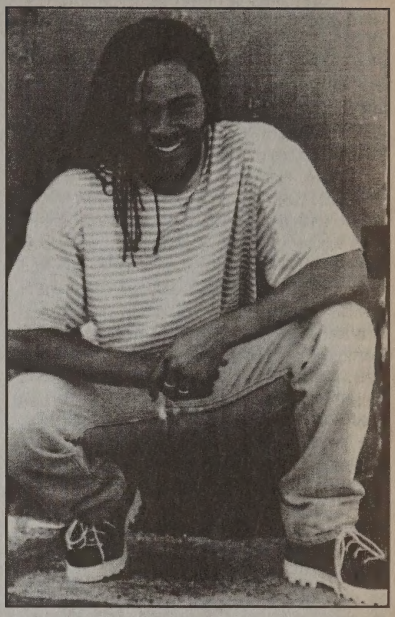
Give it up right now! (laughing) No. What I would say is that it is absolutely possible to have everything that you want, which is the dream of your career, the love of your life and family. But what you have to do to have that is three things: You have to be very patient, you have to be extremely sensitive, and by that I mean you have to be politically sensitive as well as artistically sensitive, and three, you have to be incredibly creative. And you have to not let anybody tell you that you can't be. And I mean creative in not only the work you're doing but in the choices that you make and the way that you relate to people. You have to make your life your art. If your life is always your art, you will reach a level of prominence, first, in your own community, and then in the world, that will allow you to live comfortable as the man or woman that you are. And if they do all that, they can have my job too.

"God is good and has a way of balancing these things out...there are comedians who miss the point regarding the differences between us and the opportunities for love that those differences provide."

ACTOR/DANCER/SINGER

SHAUN EARL

FROM BROADWAY TO TINSELTOWN, TALENT AND TRUTH PAY THE 'RENT'



Dancer, singer, actor Shaun Earl has come a long way since his teenage days as part of the Rainbow Connection dance company where Chip Fields (Kim's actress mom) and choreographer Bruce Heath turned eager and talented teens into polished professionals. And Shaun was, from the beginning, one of the stand outs. To no one's surprise he quickly landed a regular dancer role on the last two seasons of the television show Fame, and bridged that with many years of dance gigs, backing some of the music industry's top recording artist on stage---including 2 1/2 years on the road with Reba McEntire---and in videos to what many would call his crowning achievement; playing the heroic drag queen Angel in *Rent*, the most acclaimed Broadway musical of the past 30 years. And the responsibility that comes with a show of such cultural significance is something that Shaun takes in stride.

"I never put pressure on myself like that," the boyishly handsome artist says with characteristic modesty, " *Rent* is a great show and I'm so glad to be a part of it, but it's like me saying after doing *Fame* that I was never going to take another show that doesn't meet that level, or I'm not going to work under a certain salary. I would have been hungry. I mean, I just enjoy doing what I do. And yes, I'm selective just because I don't want to, if you will, have Hollywood string me by my balls. I don't want to be living at the mercy of Hollywood. I never lived above my means, that way I could choose what I wanted to do.

"But this (doing *Rent*) is something wonderful. I mean, in my career, I might get a television show but it will never represent what this show means to me."

A contemporary reworking of the Pucini opera *La Boheme*, *Rent* is the story of four struggling young artist sharing an unheated flat in New York's East Village where same gender love is the casual backdrop to an often celebratory, often deeply painful examination of artistic survival. As we watch these characters fight the ravages of homelessness, succumb to AIDS, struggle for artistic dignity and share the many precious forms of love, the triumphant sense of this masterwork is made even greater by its tear-jerking sorrow.

Angel---the role Shaun do magnificently essays---has given long overdue recognition to the dignity, determination and the social/political contributions made by transgenders of color (let us not forget that it was black and Puerto Rican drag queens who started the Stonewall Rebellion and the resulting modern gay movement when 30 years ago they boldly stood up for their rights and refused to succumb to police harassment and brutality).

Although Shaun does not consider himself well versed in the transgender world---"I didn't go into the show or into the role knowing what I was getting into because I was doing something completely different before this. Basically, when I went to the audition, I picked up the music for Angel because I liked the name"---he has, nonetheless, come to understand it's significance.

"When I saw the show I just love the entire show in general. Doing the part of Angel I had people come up to me and say, not so much that I represented the transvestite community really well, but that they liked my interpretation. For those that are gay in the audience I've had many of them come up to me and compliment me on my interpretation and most of that is because of what (the late writer/composer of the show) Jonathan Larson created in his words and music. I had the chance to meet the person who repre-

sented Angel in his life. And, like Angel, he's HIV positive .

"What I like about the show in regards to sexuality is that it shows acceptance on many levels and it's a celebration of life, and I just think in general---not to just lock it down to gay/straight issues---I like the fact that the taboo relationship---the relationship between Angel and Collins--- is the most functional one. It's really all about being loved.

"My character Angel needs people to challenge themselves to get into a relationship where there's more. It's about more than sex. It's about love. It's about life. It's also about living no day but today . Seizing the moment, not taking your life or people for granted. Because a lot of people have to get a wake up call only when they're diagnosed with cancer, and all of a sudden they want to go parachuting, or loving their family the last year they're alive, waiting till the last minute. I've been around people who suddenly have an aneurysm and die with so much left unpatched up.

"When I was on *Fame* we had a little brat pack where a group of us hung around together all the time. And there would be little cat fights here and there, but you take things for granted because you know they know you're just kidding. I mean, things are just assumed. And then the person just slips through your fingers unexpectedly one weekend and it's unsettling. And then here we are at the service and saying wonderful things about this person that they had no idea we felt. And living that, seeing that, this sort of affirmed what I feel now because of losing people, as you know."

Sense his days working on *Fame*, a show which, at the time, was perhaps the only program boasting a large number of openly gay cast members, Shaun has seen a lot change in the industry regarding the perception of homosexuality.

"I'm seeing more gay characters. As far as accepting it, well, I've been around gay performers all my life and throughout my career so it's really not an issue. I'm just around performers and that's pretty much what people want to know about you first. Or things are just assumed about you, but you don't really wonder whether people are going to love you or hate you because you're gay. You know, we're in showbizness and it's kind of expected that you are.

But, yes, from *Fame* up until *Ellen*, I've noticed a big change; good examples of it, bad examples, stereotypes, etc. You hear about a lot more people being open now, as far as expressing their experience. I don't know if it's more like a badge because it's kind of popular to be gay now or bisexual or whatever. But I'm the kind of person that observes. I'm not really open anything because I'm not really in a position where people ask me, and I don't really meet friends or make friends with people wondering if they're gay or straight. I just make friends. I don't really have a sexual agenda. That's just really not in my realm of conversation. I mean, I hear people talking about it but I just eat and watch the movie (laughing). People usually ask people that are close to me what my story is, but they don't usually approach me and ask me."

Shaun Earl as Angel and Mark Leroy Jackson as his lover Tom Collins

photo by Joan Marcu

Is he unapproachable?

"I don't know. I don't think so. People use to stare at me from a very young age. Why they used to stare I never knew, but then because of the notoriety and the shows I was on and all the back-to-back videos I was doing---but you never know. I never assumed that people were staring at me because they wanted me. Because I know me. I love looking at beautiful people but then I'll go home. Or if it seems like my staring is becoming rude or if I'm with my friends, I'll approach the person and compliment them---'wow, great eyes', or whatever-- and then I'll go home.

"Because of the celebrity status, people assume beyond what your sexuality is. They think about the whole Hollywood scene and they just assume that you're going to be stuck up. So you're pretty much judged on that level before you're given a chance. I'm very personable and I do like people, I could just be shy and they'd think I was stuck up, but then I break down the wall because I am receptive and then they're in shock. But I'm usually the one that has to put forth the effort.

There have been rumors that a film version of *Rent* is in the works, and although Shaun concedes that the film roles will probably go to major celebrities, he would love to recreate his celestial transvestite for the big screen.

But in the meantime, this native Los Angeleno dancer turned actor-singer, turned Broadway star is enjoying the limelight and the ovations and the cheers 8 times a week on that magical stage where he's able to give audiences hope and a sense of decency and dreams and love in the personification of a drag queen named Angel, a character so aptly named.

[The national touring company of Rent is currently playing at the Shubert Theatre in the Century City section of Los Angeles, California]

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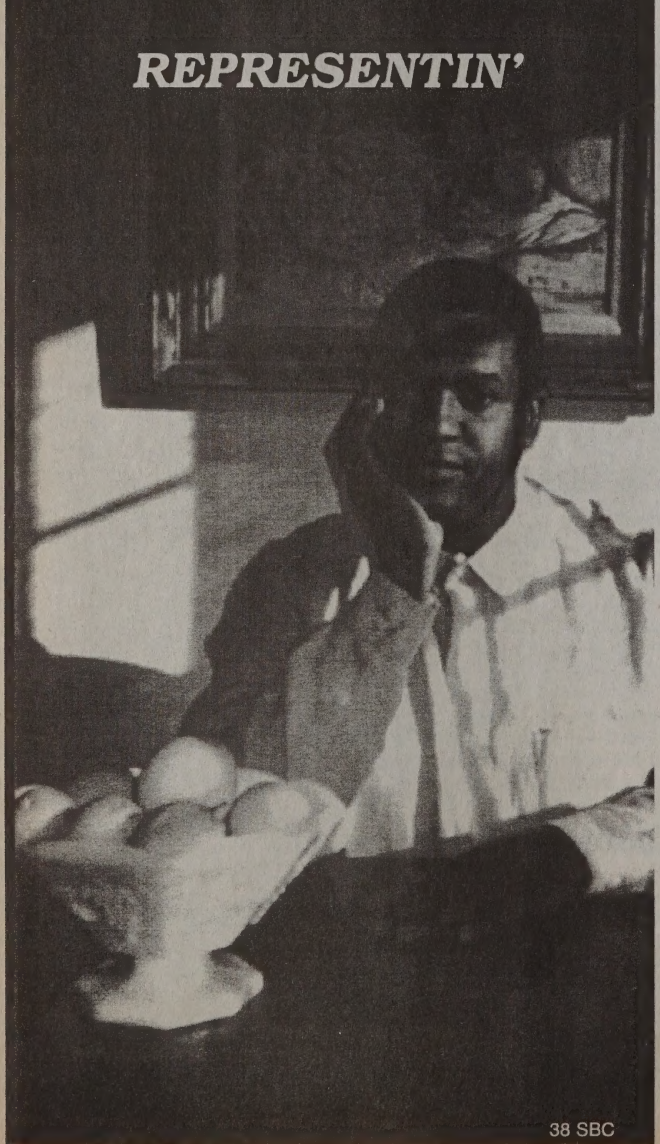
CHARLES CLAY



For the last 11 of his 16 years in the netertainment business, Charles Clay has been a theatrical agent. Co-owner/operator of Schiowits/Clay/Rose, Inc. he represents several actors, some homosexual, some not. Clay, open about and comfortable with his own homosexuality, moves in a circle of several same gender loving Hollywood movers and shakers.

"I have straight clients and I have gay clients. I don't give either one any specific instructions on how to carry themselves," he said from an earlier interview, "but I do believe that iof a gay actor is too closeted, he can do more harm than good when it comes to getting a role. After all, acting is about honesty."

The Charlotte, North Carolina native once had his eye on news casting, but in Hollywood, things change quikcer than the latest gossip.

"Life is what happens when you're making other plans", he says fondly as we have lunch around the corner from his Hollywood & Vine office.

Intended to be a news caster. "Life is what happens when you're making other plans'.

Stanley Bennett Clay: You entered the business as an openly homosexual man 16 years ago. How do you see it now as opposed to then?

Charles Clay: First I started in production. I worked on The Late Show With Joan Rivers, Gimme A Break, The Cosby Show and A Different World. So I was behind the scenes. And I didn't notice a lot of people who were out at the time in production, but the longer I was in production, the more I saw people coming out. Now as an agent what I've noticed over the years that now it is not unusual for successful actors to being openly gay playing straight roles. I see that continuing. For instance, we have a client who just finished doing a lead in a movie playing a straight role. So when he came back from location he was met at the airport by his boyfriend, and they hugged and they kissed. And someone, I guess, on the production saw this and mentioned it to the casting director. The casting director then called me, and I said 'How wonderful that they were able to express their feelings for each other!' I think my point is that before, that would have never happened, but now this actor was comfortable enough to do that. I think what we're working toward is an actor being able to be who he is and not have to hide. his expression of love.

There are series regulars on several television shows that are gay playing straight roles; people that are definitely out, not necessarily people carrying flags, but people who aren't denying their sexuality in any way and being very successful. We have a lot of people now that are out and are working and everybody knows. Now when I say everyone knows, I mean primarily in the business, I'm not talking about Johnny Public, but all the decision makers because this is a very small town and we all socialize together.

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There are some high profile shows like Ellen where we can look at it and say that the show was canceled because she was gay but, frankly, I think it was canceled because it just wasn't funny anymore.

Is there a difference in white actors being able to be out as opposed to black actors, and do you see that in the business?

No I don't.

So there are as many black actors that are comfortable being out?

I actually know fewer black actors, but most of my friends---and I guess I'm outing them without saying names---are actors and are out and are comfortable and are successful. I remember once that an agent who shall remain nameless actually had classes in how to approach casting directors that are gay. For me, I found that very uncomfortable. Does that kind of thing still exist?

I've heard about the casting couch, I've read about the casting couch, I've seen it in movies. I've never experienced it in any way in real life. You know if I have an actor who's gay and he's going to meet a casting director who's gay, and the actor flirts a little bit, that's just life and that's how it works. We are human and we have human reactions. And sometimes there is a flirtation between a gay actor and a gay casting director, just as there is sometimes a flirtation between a straight actor and a straight casting director. That's just normal. I wouldn't teach anyone how to do it. If they don't know how to flirt on their own, they have a problem.

When do you think we'll get to the point where the public will be more accepting?

Well, I actually think we're there. If you notice in the TV Guide Awards that were just announced recently, Nathan Lane was nominated for Best Performer. He's openly gay, he's very successful. Most of the characters he plays on film are gay. The public has said, 'we like him'. The new television show Will & Grace is about a straight woman and her gay best friend. And the show is more about him than it is about her. And it was nominated for Best New Show. And that has continued to happen. So I think the public has accepted it largely. I think what we have to understand is that there will always be people that are closeted, people that are bigoted and people that are frightened of the effects of other people coming out. The majority of America does not care. The stigma is not what we assign to it. And I've been out my whole adult life and throughout my years in the business, so I'm not talking from the perspective of someone who is not out of the closet or newly out of the closet. I've actually seen it.

We don't have any high profile black actors that have come out, but there are many working black actors who are openly gay playing a wide variety of roles.

Is it easier for lesbians in this business because of the ground Ellen has broken?

I think it started a long time before Ellen. The lesbian influx into the entertainment industry started a long time ago. But I think it's easier for lesbians in almost any field because people simply don't believe that lesbians exist. They pass, if they choose to, for heterosexuals much more easily than gay men. Even lesbians that are a little more butch than what we think of as a heterosexual woman, they pass so much easier. People don't believe they exist. And that's a group phenomenon.

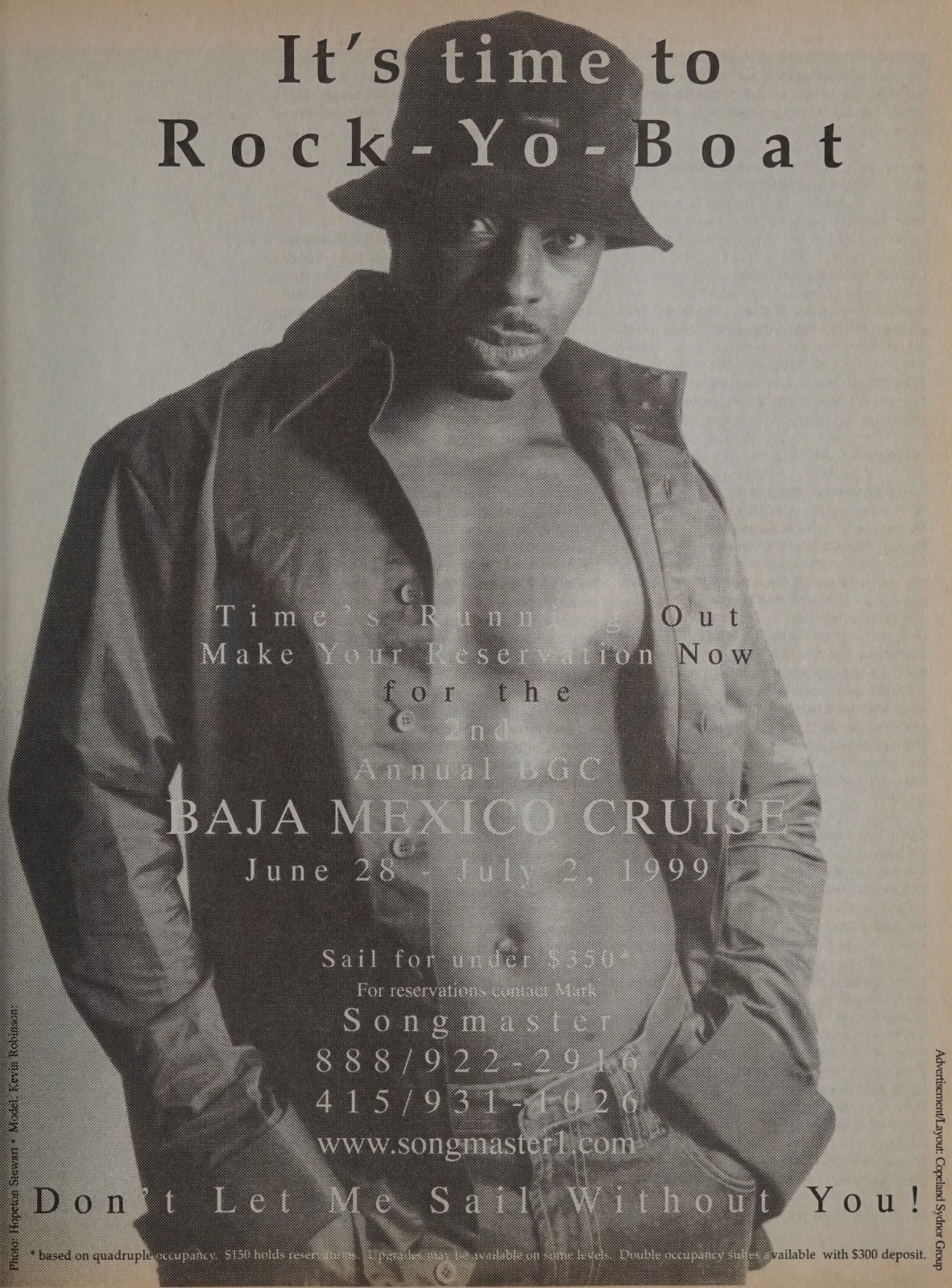
There was a time, in the fan magazine area, in the publicity arena, personas were created either by the actors themselves and/or their publicists, managers, etc. Gay actors would appear at awards shows with beautiful women on their arms, or bogus romances were created in fan magazines for cover. We look at the rap world where there's a huge percentage of homosexuals, bisexuals and men who have sex with men for whatever reason, yet, they still maintain this heterosexual persona. Is that becoming a thing of the past or is it still being perpetuated?

I don't have much experience with the music world, but in the area of film and television and theatre, all you have to do is look at the awards shows and watch who comes with whom. And year after year, there are more and more men in their acceptance speeches thanking their lovers, arriving with their lovers and kissing their lovers when the camera pans over them as their name is called. You'll see it again at the Oscars.

I know that in the black community there's been more of a stigma against being gay than there has been in the general community at large, so maybe in the rap community it's a little harder to break down those barriers. I'm not sure.

Thinking of Ellen Degeneres and Anne Heche, how far are we away from seeing the poster male couple?

I don't know. I do know that there are gay male couples that are very successful in the entertainment industry. But I think the reason why Ellen and Anne are so public is because they are public figures. They are both entertainers whereas most of the male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couples that I know are on the business side of the entertainment industry where there is never a camera focused on our lives. Maybe if Greg Luganis gets a new boyfriend we'll have one.

I read recently that Laurence Fishbourne is playing a famous black gay detective. Are we going to see more black actors who may or may not necessarily be gay go after gay roles because of the artistic diversity offered?

I don't think it's going to be a trend. As much as I sit here and tell you that the stigma is dropping, it's not dropping fast enough in the African American community.

I also think of Wesley Snipes wonderful performance in Too Wong Foo, although he was one ugly drag queen (laughing).

(laughing)) He was an ugly drag queen, but he was really, really good, and I was really surprised. Now that I think of it, we do have a high profile poster couple: Eddie Murphy and who was that girl on Santa Monica Blvd.? (another laugh)

(laughing) Okay. Now you talk about the barriers falling slower in our community. Why is that, in your opinion?

I don't know. You know, one would think that as a people we've been oppressed because we've suffered all kinds of racism, both hidden and open, that we would be more accepting of other minority groups. It's not that way though. In fact we often have more prejudices against other people than a lot of other groups that I've met.

Do you think that the black homosexual himself is responsible to a degree? Because if he projects a certain shame about himself in the community, doesn't that feed into the community's non-acceptance of him.

Well, it's sort of of, which came first, the chicken or the egg. But as we become more comfortable with ourselves and more open we do project more positive images for younger people growing up, and they will grow up being more comfortable with themselves, and as that chain begins to happen their will be less prejudice in our community against us. But, the fact does exist that that prejudice exists in our community which makes some people fearful of coming out.

Is there a black homosexual network that exist in Hollywood?

Maybe. Most of my friends are gay and are in some form of the entertainment industry, but I have a kaleidoscope of friends. I think that in the black entertainment community, it's not as compartmentalized. We're sort of mixed in with everyone else.

What would be your advice to a young black actor who was also homosexual?

It would be the same advice that I would give to anyone: Be very professional, know your craft and remember who you meet. You have to treat your contacts like they're jewels because that's where all your future work comes from. Any actor in this town has to be prepared; prepared with their performance skills, prepared in every way. And that's no different for a black actor or a gay actor.

As a gay actor you bring a little bit more to the table because you have that experience of perhaps, during your youth, trying to fit in, trying to be straight, so you know how to play that, but you have the added sensitivity of your gayness. And you have to be proud of yourself. I've been in the entertainment business for 16 years and I've never encounter any prejudicial treatment because I am gay, and that's because I'm comfortable with who I am. If you're comfortable with who you are, no one can challenge your right to be that person.

You know there's always been this stigma in Hollywood towards minorities. Young minorities coming to town are generally offered roles as the maids, the pimps, the whores, the hooker the gangbangers; all the bad roles, roles that are usually far away from their life experiences. But I say take all those job. Take every single one of them right to the bank---it's more tape on your reel---and eventually you get to be known as the actor that works and then you begin to break out of that genre. You've paid your dues. You've supported yourself as an actor and you've made your name known within the entertainment community as someone who a casting director can call in and who will do what they need to do to get the job. Because when they bring you in they want you to get the job. That makes them look good to their producer and their director. Their job is to find talented people, so let them keep finding you. And eventually you'll be able to choose your roles.

Also, you must persevere. It's a hard town for anyone. There are so many very, very talented actors out here. If you allow anything to be an excuse for you not being successful, then that will be the reason you're not successful.

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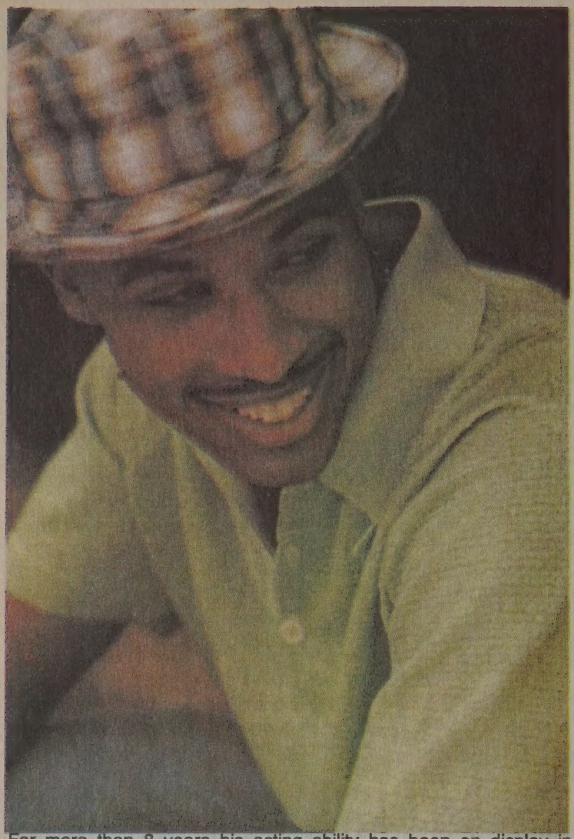


ACTOR/MODEL

BASHIER

CLIMBING THE LADDER TOWARD SUCCESS

For more than 8 years his acting ability has been on display in dozens of TV shows and movies such as 'Set It Off', 'Beverly Hills 90210', 'Thhe Parenthood', 'Moesha' and 'L.A. Heat', just to name a few. At a lean 5' 11" and 164 lbs, the talented native Los Angeleno actor also knows his way around high fashion runways and today's top designers and photographers. His face and lithe physique have graced many a newspaper and magazine fashion layout hawking everything from urban contempo-wear to high end fragrances for the most discriminating of men .

His name is Bashier. Just Bashier. And he'll be the first to tell you that performing is in his blood.

"I must have been about 6 years old", he says with a full-lip smile that reveals two perfect rows of movie-star white teeth, "I remember sitting at the foot of my mother's bed watching two movies 'Funny Girl' with Barbara Streisand and "Whatever Happened To Baby Jane?' with Bette Davis. And it wasn't so much the movies themselves, it was the people. I was just overcome and blown away by their performances. And I just knew right then and there. I remember running to the television and pointing and telling my mom, ' I wanna do this!' And as I got older the passion for performing just consumed me, it overwhelmed me. It was something that I had to do."

In the sixth grade he was cast in his school production of RIP VAN WINKLE in the role of The Mayor: "When I got that standing ovation at the end of the show, I knew I was hooked."

He later went on to The Hollywood High School of Performing Arts, the seedling ground for many young professionals working in front of the camera today. " I was a nerd in school," he concedes with a laugh, "I really didn't have a lot of friends, so I embraced acting."

After high school, modeling assignments---and the attendant cash flow---came quickly "but then I stopped because I had to think about why I was doing this. Was I doing this because of the money, or was I doing it because I had a passion for it? I knew I couldn't see myself doing a 9-to-5. So after a time, I realized that it [being in show business] was truly what I wanted to do."

Soon he found himself doing extra work on several television shows which served as a training ground and an observational vantage point for him. though many others loathe the life on an extra, working as one paid off and principle acting roles quickly followed, although he was faced with a challenge of conscience.

"When I first started doing principle roles, I was being cast as gangsters, so I just stopped. I just couldn't do those kinds of roles. My acting inspirations worked too hard. Now I'm not saying I'm this extraordinary actor, but then again I will say that I possess a certain quality that calls for more than just playing a thug pulling out some gun and shooting someone."

Eric Bashier Davis---he uses his middle name on the marquee---is in many ways like so many young African-American artists carving out a career and an income in an industry that has, more often than not, dealt dubiously with the media representation of the black community.

Comfortable with who he is and what he's all about, Bashier concedes that there is still a certain amount of homophobia in the motion picture and television industry.

"There are a lot of people in the industry who are same gender loving---but there is still that whole Hollywood charade that so many believe, you know, you can't really come out, it might ruin your career, especially if you're just starting out, and the sad thing about it, it's all hush-hush, it's all silent, If you don't know somebody that knows somebody, or if you're not that next pretty face, it's like 'what do you have to offer?' and the people that do migrate together who are same gender loving---it's really hard to find out who's who. I know that there have been times when I didn't get on certain shows because someone may have sensed my sexuality."

Yet it---homophobia---like so many other obstacles, is merely a wall meant to be climbed, and this twentysomething actor has the tenacious legs for it.

Bashier has had many memorable experiences working in the industry. "When I audition for 'The Parenthood'. I was having a bad day that day. I had to take the bus and I had to wait for the connection for over an hour. So when I got to the audition I was very foul, very evil; complaining. Now the role I was auditioning for was of a bully, so I guess my attitude at the time fit right into the role. I mean, I didn't even care if I got the role or not. So two days later my agent called me and told me I had a call back. So I went back and read for them again and afterwards Robert Townsend (the show's star and producer) said to me, 'you've done this before.' Then after that the casting director said to me ' would you mind reading with the cast? Oh, by the way, you got the part'. And I just hyperventilated.

"Now that was my biggest thrill getting the job, but doing the job, I'd have to say would be my role on 'Moesha' when I played what I like to call the 'bourgie gay boy' Tracy who breaks up the little restaurant scene between Moesha and the character of Omar. That was my fondest memory because the audience took to Tracy so well. I had a lot of fun playing him."

There seems to be a lot of opportunity now days for young black actors to play middle class and upper middle class, non-gangster roles. "Yes, and I am happy to see that. When I was younger my mother refused to let us watch 'Good Times' and shows of that nature because she didn't want that image to be a fixture in our lives, having us think that we were only subjected to living in lower class situations, living on welfare and things of that nature. And when I was young back then I was mad that I couldn't watch shows like that, but later I realized she was definitely looking out for my best interest. So I'm glad to see that we have shows that reflect our middle class situations. As long as they're realistic."

Success in the movie and television industry can be fleeting, if not down right illusive. And though there is no formula to 'making it', Bashier offers some advice that can steer one onto the right path:

"First of all, pray. No matter what you're doing, even if it's working at MacDonalds, be the best that you can be, but never make a move unless you have a talk, I mean a real spiritual talk, with God and ask Him, go to Him, bring it to Him. I get my motivation from God and my love for Him.

"And the next step is to make sure you have someone, be it your parent or close friend,who's definitely in your corner and seeks your best interest as far as your career is concerned, not their best interest, because a lot of people in Hollywood will take the next fresh face and they will use you.

"And learn everything you can about the business---behind the scenes, in front of the scenes---learn everything you can, even the things that you think won't interest you, or things you think you don't need to know, learn it! It will strengthen you and will help you to grow and achieve sooner than what you probably would have projected.

"Specific tools? Try to get a good manager and agent.. Good head shots (pictures) are a must because the casting people have to know what you look like and if you're castable. And you don't have to spent all this money on a whole lot of headshots. Just one good strong theatrical and one good strong commercial head shot are all you need.

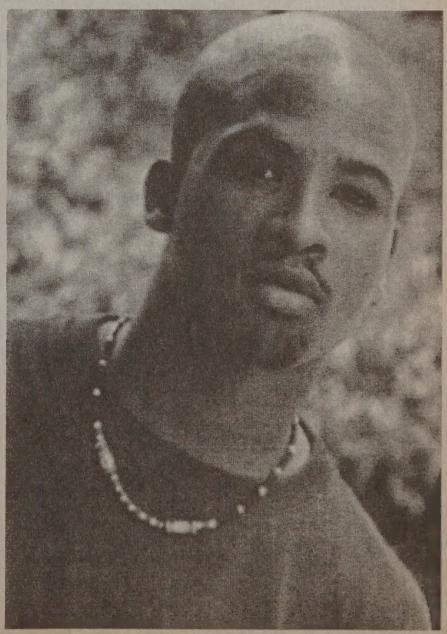
"Acting workshops are very very important, but remember an acting instructor can't teach you how to act. They can teach you how to bring your emotions out quicker, but they can't teach you how to act. You have to already possess that certain something. And those workshops are another way to learn about the business and to network because you never know, in those workshops you could be sitting next to a producer or a writer or a future up-and-coming film maker."

"Keep it mind that competition is stiff. When I went on the audition for 'Moesha', that room was filled with at least 60 boys. Yes, the competition is very stiff, but you gotta believe in yourself, you gotta walk on faith. Whether you get that job or not.. The casting person may say that you're not right for this particular part but they may keep you in mind for another role down the line.

"And whatever you do, make sure you get your proper rest and exercise. You're going to need it."

Currently Bashier, who also writes poetry and song lyrics, is working on a spoken word project, which is one of many new pursuits in an ever widening effort to apply his talent.

With God first, he is also inspired by family and close friend and personal influences. "I call them my high inspirations, such as Me' Shell Ndege' ocello, Janet Jackson, Madonna, Laurence Fishburne, Angela Bassett, Alfre Woodard, Morgan Freeman, people like that. They offer such deep creative expression in everything they do that everyday they talk to me, they breathe in me, they move in me. They and my family and my friends and The Creator allow me to continue to climb the ladder in the entertainment industry, letting nothing stop me. "



Bashier makes one a believer.

COMMITTED COUPLES: THE LOVE THAT BINDS

Lori Williams and Alice Sanders have been in a committed relationship for a little over a year. Lori met Alice a few months after she relocated to the Midwest to pursue her career goals. Driven to succeed and set trends, these two very strong, independent, and vivacious women knew there was something very special taking place at the very moment they met. The attraction was intense and dynamic to say the least. As a result, a deeply passionate partnership has developed.

"My commitment to Alice is based on two principles: understanding and trust," Lori states.

Alice believes, in her heart of hearts, that there is a very strong possibility for longevity in same gender loving relationships and she, along with her partner, is determined to be a happy example of that.

As they plan their commitment ceremony for the year 2000, they reflect on their success and realize that maintaining complete and total honesty, the ability to talk and relate to one another, having trust and accepting each other as individuals, and having a great sense of humor, are key elements.

"I'm proud to say that Alice and I haven't had any real challenges or struggles as of yet and our relationship with extended family members has been exceptional," Lori continues. "Alice has developed a loving bond with both my daughter and granddaughter."

Lori concedes that she felt a sense of loneliness after relocating to the Midwest, but making connections with other same gender loving

FOR LORI & ALICE: ROMANCE KEEPS THE HOME FIRES WARM

by Debra A. Rodgers and Lenore Myishia Rivers
Sister Affairs Co-Editors

couples in her new city, holding tight to those friendships established on the west coast and the ease and comfort of her loving relationship with Alice has made the transition smooth. "Our relationship is rock solid because we've each invested so much of ourselves into it during this year of courtship. The intimacy between us remains passionate, exciting, and unimpeded."

Alice is not 'out' at work, nor within their very conservative new hometown. This
has posed a bit of a challenge for Lori who has always been very vocal about her sexuality, very affectionate with her partner when out in public, and open to co-workers about same gender loving relationships. However, with respect to Alice's position on maintaining a certain level of privacy, Lori has adopted a new attitude. She does not discuss her lifestyle with others at work, she is very discreet when out in public with Alice, and she accepts the fact that they live in a town which is somewhat homophobic.

As yet, they have not found a social club frequented by a mature professional same gender loving crowd in their new city, but every once in a while, they will venture out to a family social gathering---the family embraces their relationship without judgment or shame---but for the most part, they enjoy spending quiet evenings in each other's company.

In five years, Lori and Alice would like to travel around the country, perhaps settle down in a town that is gay-friendly. Alice wants to retire, relax, and spend her days on her yacht fishing. Lori wants to settle down with her future wife, pamper her, and spoil her rotten.

Both believe it is very important that legislation support same gender loving marriages; "because this is a human rights issue and everyone deserves to walk in their own brand of dignity. This not about validating relationships in society's eyes, this is about having legal rights within your same gender loving commitments. When marriages are legalized, the love we have for each other, and the way it is expressed, would simply intensify" says Lori.

Lori's philosophy about having a successful long term relationship is to keep your affairs within your home. Lori's past experience with a companion of seven years was a very painful learning curve. She and her ex established many friendships over the years, and too many of their friends had an opinion about the essence of their relationship. Mess-stirring was rampant. Lori and Alice keep their business to themselves, solve their own challenges, and engage in conversations that are optimistic and uplifting.

They both agree that it is very, very important to keep romance and sex between them exciting, uninhibited, and adventurous. "I urge Lori to always express feelings of affection.," say Alice. "and we both keep an open mind, remain honest, and have lots of fun. Laughter is key to longevity and wellness!"

"Not a day goes by that Alice does not tell me how much she loves me," says Lori. "At home she is so affectionate, she always wants to know if I'm ok, and she supports my career goals. She is always a pillar of strength, and she is a positive force in my life."

"Past relationships do not even compare to this," says Alice. "My relationship with Lori tops all. Since I met baby, I've been so happy. I'm smiling all of the time. I eat, sleep, and feel her. She makes me feel like a real stud. It is great to come home to Lori everyday, and I just love her so much!"

" I meditate, relax, relate, and release on a daily basis. I think positive most of the time and my attitude reflects this in all my daily affairs." says Lori. "It's reflected in my love for Alice."

COMMITTED COUPLES: THE LOVE THAT BINDS

On May 31st accountant Nathan Mitchell and HIV Education Specialist Dwayne Jenkins will celebrate their 4th anniversary in much the same way as they celebrate everything else. With little fanfare. Both 34, this Nashville, Tennessee couple seem like old souls settled into the comfort of an uncomplicated relationship. They seem so well suited for each other, their pleasures are compatible and often mutual. It's a love affair between two men who really like each other. Two men who are friends.

Nathan & Dwayne

"Friendship plays the most important part in our relationship," says Nathan, "because we are friends overall. Friendship was the initial foundation, and regardless of what we go through, we're still friends. A lot of people don't understand what that means. If you really have a true friend, a knowing true friend, regardless of what you're going through in life---they may not agree with you, they may tell you this and they may tell you that, but they still remain your friend."

Dwayne, originally from Buffalo, New York, met Nathan, originally from Akron, Ohio, at a Brothers United of Nashville planning meeting (Brother United is now a popular support and affirmation group for same gender loving African Americans men)---they had both recently relocated to the Tennessee capitol.

Nathan a pragmatic ex-military man, former Sunday school teacher and son of a preacher, is direct about his first response: "Initially there was nothing. I had attended several of the planning meetings for Brothers United and my birthday was May 13th. So Dwayne had sent me a birthday card. And when I received it, I simply called him to thank him. This was on a Monday. And when I called, not knowing his personal situation, he identified on his answering service himself, his dog and another person, so I realized that he was in a relationship. So I didn't think anything else about it, and since he didn't respond to me within a few days I just let it go. And then on Friday of that same week he called and asked me if I'd mine going to a movie, so it was at that point that I realized that whoever that other person was was probably a roommate. And from that moment on we began to talk and to get to know one another. We began exploring our differences and those things we had in common."

Dwayne, the current Brothers United Coordinator, remembers: "I though he was such a gentleman at the meeting. Just his whole posture and his whole being. But then, not going into the meeting looking for a relationship or anything, I didn't pay any attention to it.

"The thing that struck me was right before Nathan was leaving to go back home for his birthday he said something that really stuck with me. You see, in the group we were listing everybody's birthday and when we got around to his, he said something like 'Well, yeah, it's my birthday but don't nobody care. I mean, who cares about me anyway.' It was something like that. And it just stuck with me, and I was thinking, 'well, that's not good for someone to think that' and that's when I started thinking about getting him a card. So I went to the card store and I saw this card of a dog peeing on a birthday cake and I said 'this is perfect' because of his attitude toward his birthday."

Nathan accepted Dwayne's invitation to the movies where they then discovered they had something else in common:

"I am a cheap person," declares Nathan proudly, "and Dwayne is a cheap person and we maintain that about ourselves."

"And don't say frugal," Dwayne chimes in with equal pride, "don't say conservative. We are cheap!"

Nathan remembers: "When Dwayne first asked me to go to the movies, we went to the $1.75 show because he explained to me that he only had $5 and that the movie he wanted to see was playing at the $1.75 and he said if that's fine, fine, if not he'd understand. Now I was elated because I was going to the $1.75 too. Because when he first said movie, I thought 'Lord, how am I gonna tell him that I don't wanna spend no $5.75 to see no movie."

"And he didn't have to tell me." Dwayne adds "It worked out. That's where we went and that's where we still go."

Nathan adds: "See, that's the thing. I believe that being active with each other, getting to know each other, you

FOR DWAYNE & NATHAN: IT'S LOVE BELOW THE BIBLE BELT

by Leland Gale

don't always have to do the elaborate thing in order to show someone that you're interested in them. It's about 'hey, this is what I'm about.' If you see me on the street, if you see me in the clubs, if you see me on the job, I want to remain the same."

The realization that they were made for each other was a no brainer. Within the month they were wearing companion rings.

"We had been getting to know each other, sitting down and communicating and talking, becoming friends." recalls Nathan, "We had both just gotten out of relationships. The people that we were involved with were very much alike. They had different names. They come from different backgrounds, but their overall character was the same, so we could identify with what we did not want. So therefore, just by getting to know each other we found out we had a lot in common.

"And friendship was the most important. Regardless what may or may not have happened in trying to get to know each other, the friendship was something we were going to try and hold on to."

Aside from the $1.75 movie, Nathan and Dwayne like to just sit at home and rent movies. In the summer they like riding their bike and walking their dog, Ashley, through the park.

"People might find us kind of boring," laughs Dwayne.

Nathan, clearly enjoying the simplicity of it all, said : "Being in a relationship, being married, you have a sort of normalcy about things in your life. You work from Monday thru Friday, Saturday mornings you do the household chores and then you try to do something outside of that. We go where we're invited, we invite people into our surroundings, our environment. We really just enjoy life as it comes and take it one day at a time."

They also get in there share of traveling. As an HIV Education Specialist, Dwayne must often travel the country to seminars and conferences. Nathan usually accompanies him and after the meetings they tour the city---a recent trip to London stands out--- snatching a bit here and there of the honeymoon they haven't really taken.

"I think we're pretty practical," says Nathan. "We're just about being who we are. We don't put on for each other and we don't put on for our friends."

No relationship exits completely without challenges and Nathan and Dwayne's is no different.

"Maintaining our individuality is challenging," says Nathan. "I'm not one to just 'do' because I'm involved with somebody. If I don't feel like doing something, or if I don't agree with you, I'm going to flat out tell you that I don't agree with you. I'm a person that likes to be heard. which means I'm not going to stifle what I want to say to you because I'm involved with you."

"Challenging?" Dwayne asks quizzically, then after taking a moment to think about it, "...for me it's having that one person that you're in a relationship with knowing you more than anyone else. That's kind of challenging."

Security is what Nathan says he enjoys the most about the relationship, "someone in your life that loves you unconditionally." Dwayne calls it trust. "It's knowing that someone is there for you. Whether you're having a good day, a bad day, a happy day, or a sad day, there's someone there for you, to share it with, to get some understanding from."

They make it a point to have their evening meals together and are usually in bed by 8-8:30 at night. Prayer and praying together is a big part of there life, as is overall spirituality, even though attending church is not particularly high on their list.

"Being here in the Bible belt, the church structure is not for either one

"One of the things I really like, which we haven't done lately, is read together. I like it when Nathan reads scriptures to me, because I'm not a real in depth Bible reader. I know certain scriptures, but then, he'll go over them and he'll explain them to me. I miss that. Hopefully we'll start doing that again. And we pray together."

of us,' Dwayne says. "Many times I've stood up in church and said something to the pastor and the members and everybody else, and they just always put it off on 'well, there he goes again, that irate New Yorker. But a lot of the stuff I just don't agree with and I let it be known, and as far as I'm concerned, if God ain't here (in the church) I at least know he's in my house. So I just let them know that I'll see yall later while yall talk about Adam and Steve and talking about all that other stuff while I'm trying to do [AIDS/HIV] outreach and prevention in the church or just trying to empower folks, they're still doing the same thing that they were doing back in the seventies when I first started going to church. The same issues still exist and I see no growth in this building, so I'm up out of here.

"One of the things I really like, which we haven't done lately, is read together. I like it when Nathan reads scriptures to me, because I'm not a real in depth Bible reader. I know certain scriptures, but then, he'll go over them and he'll explain them to me. I miss that. Hopefully we'll start doing that again. And we pray together. We don't conform to anyone else. We pray together here, if we're out at a restaurant, we're going to grab hands and pray together, and it doesn't matter who's around, but it always gets such weird reactions from people, but we don't care. We are who we are."

"I grew up in the church. My father is a pastor, my mother is a minister, I went to a nondenominational school, I was in the choir and on the usher board. I was a Sunday School teacher," Nathan says. "Spirituality is a personal thing. And regardless of the stuff from which you come, regardless of where you worship, unless you, when you're sitting by yourself, and you can actually look at yourself in the mirror and know what you believe and the things you're trying to do in life are for a higher cause and for a Higher Being, it doesn't make any difference to me, because I can grab my Bible on Sunday morning like the rest of them and go to church, but when I get there, what am I getting out of it? And what is it that I'm putting in in those days between those Sundays? A church is made up of people, and when you have a make-up of people you have other things going on, other agendas. And unless you can individually pull yourself out of it and say 'well this is what I'm about, this is what I'm standing for regardless of what you may say or think about me. It's what I think and God thinks of me. So whether I go to church on every Wednesday, on every Sunday, it doesn't matter to me. What matters to me is how you live your life from minute to minute, from day to day."

In conjunction with that: it is clear that both Nathan and Dwayne live there lives as an openly same gender loving couple.I

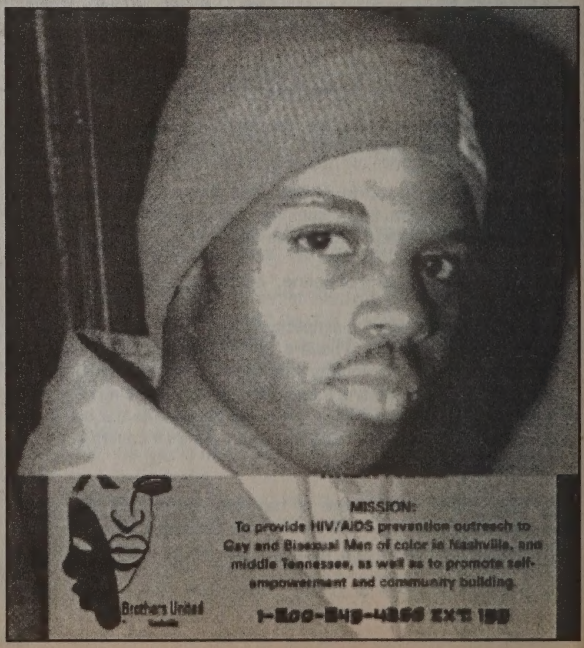
"Yes"

Do you find that challenging living in the Bible Belt?

"I'm just me." Nathan declares. "My being same gender loving is a very, very small part of who I am, because If I was not same gender loving, if I was heterosexual, if I was this, if I was that, take all that away, then what am I? I'm just who I am without my special elements. I don't find being openly same gender loving a challenge at all."

" And me, being in the profession that I'm in, I have to be 'out'," adds Dwayne. "Whenever any same gender loving issues comes up and they need a black person or a minority or whatever they want to call it, I need my name to be in there. If they need information on HIV prevention or if empowerment issues arise, I need to let people know about Brothers United and who coordinates it. Whether it's on TV or in the paper, whatever, it's general information about who I am. I thought it was going to hurt me at first because I've always been the same and coming from New York it's a little bit different then growing up here in the south. With the programs they needed someone 'out' and not worried about what the pastor's gonna say, what Aunt this is gonna say, and all that stuff. It's worked for me so far. I didn't know if it would. I thought it would scare a lot of people here, but it hasn't. Everything's been okay."

As is life for this no-nonsense couple. A strong bond of love, rooted in friendship and fortified by self-pride fueled by good spiritual vibes seem just what the doctor ordered, and not just for what ails, but, in the case of Dwayne and Nathan, the vitamins that keep these happy lovers happy.


MISSION:
To provide HIV/AIDS prevention outreach to Gay and Bisexual Men of color in Nashville, and middle Tennessee, as well as to promote self-empowerment and community building.
Brothers United
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RiDin' witH Ms. Nikki

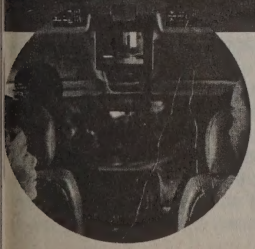
by Nikki J. Muhammad

The SILHOUETTE, is Oldsmobile's 8 passenger Minivan. It's labeled a "Fine Family Mover", and since family comes in all combinations, the 1999 Oldsmobile Silhouette Minivan is for everyone.

When I picked this vehicle up it had a full tank of gas. Two days later the gas gage was still on full. I immediately thought something was wrong, so I began watching the gas gage closely. By the fourth day it finally moved, and on the seventh day (return day) the tank was still a quarter full. Actual mileage is 15 to 21 mpg in the city and between 21 and 29 on the highway, depending on driving conditions and habits.

Silhouette is fully equipped and has an extended wheelbase (120.0-in) and an 85 horsepower @5200 rpm, 210 lb-ft of torque@4000rpm. It also boasts a 3400 (2.4 liter) V6 engine.

The dual sliding doors with the power-operated right-side sliding door seem to work with no effort. Just a slight touch and it moved on its own.



THE 1999 OLDSMOBILE SILHOUETTE MINIVAN

Most impressive is the Video Entertainment system. My Godson and daughter put in a Janet Jackson video in the video cassette player mounted in the floor console of the front seat area. They put on their headphones. Up to 6 are provided for middle-row and rear seat passengers, along with individual volume controls. The middle row jacks are overhead, third-row gear is in the right side arm rest. The video is projected clearly on an LCD color monitor that folds down from the overhead console. Overhead controls permit switching between CD, cassette tape, AM/FM stereo and videocassette sources.

Also, a big plus is a universal video input for a camcorder or video game (SonyPlay Station, Nintendo, Sega Genesis, etc.)

So while I listened to my CD, my back seat passengers grooved to the sights and sounds of Miss Janet.

OK, so how much? $31,445. Not bad considering.

For long or short trips the 1999 Silhouette continues to meet every passenger's individual needs. A refined family vehicle which offers all the amenities needed to ensure comfortable accommodations while traveling. My rating for this vehicle is 4+, which on my chart is excellent!

CONRAD

by Sergio W. Willis
photo by Valerie N. Phillips

I could barely think as I sat there by my window. The smell of ammonia drifting under my door was too distracting. My landlord was having the halls cleaned and scrubbed that day. Actually, the mood I was in...any little thing seemed to irritate me. I was stressing due to the fact that I was running weeks behind in my rent. Something really needed to be done to improve my money situation...but what? I decided to go for a walk, clear my mind and lungs.

After walking for a few blocks, I decided to catch a bus into Hollywood. Maybe I could find me a decent stud to go in my left ear. As I stood there at the bust-stop an attractive brother walked over to me. He was cocoa-complexioned with a bald head. I figured he was around my age. He was wearing a black t-shirt and shorts. The fellow looked to be my height...but I couldn't help noticing those muscular arms, chest and legs. His eyes locked on to mine.

"Hey you...wanna buy a bus-pass? I'm selling for seven dollars."

I examined the buss-pass he'd handed to me. I reached into my pocket. There was a $10 bill in it.

"I'm sorry, this is all I have," I told him.

He smiled and reached into his pocket. He took out some keys and handed them to me.

"Man, my name's Conrad and these are my house keys...I'll go get change for you."

I can't explain it but something told me to trust this fool. I took the keys and handed him the money.

"My name's Sergio and..." I looked at him, kind of unsure.

"Buddy, those are my house keys...believe me, I ain't going nowhere without them." He laughed and so did I.

Conrad walked across the street to a Texaco and disappeared inside. About a minute later Conrad came out of the store. He stood still for a moment, then saluted me and took off running. I looked around to make sure no one had witnessed me getting ripped off. Thankfully, no one seemed to notice anything. God, I felt like such a fool. I took a deep breath and wished that the bus would come quickly to take me away. I glanced at the bus-pass in my hand again. Yeah, it definitely was real, but what the hell was I going to do with the keys?

"Hey, yo!" I heard a voice behind me. I turned around to see Conrad standing there. Grinning, he placed some folded-up greenbacks in my hand.

"Psyched you out, huh?"

I was at a loss for words.

"Uh...I think I'm gonna need those back, my man." He indicated his keys. I held the keys out. When he reached for them I tossed them over my shoulder into some bushes.

"Psyched you out, huh?" I got on the bus which had just pulled up.

Two weeks had passed since last I saw my "friend"...Conrad, that is. The whole incident was such a freaky thing; it wasn't likely I'd forget about it for a long time. This certain Monday morning---as I did my grocery shopping, trying to avoid the crowd---my mind was heavy on Conrad. I couldn't get homeboy out of my mind...at least, not his body. I almost ran into some lady with my shopping cart because I was so busy thinking R-rated things about you-know-who. Truth be known, part of my felt bad about tossing his keys the way I had, but I had a right to be pissed off, didn't I?

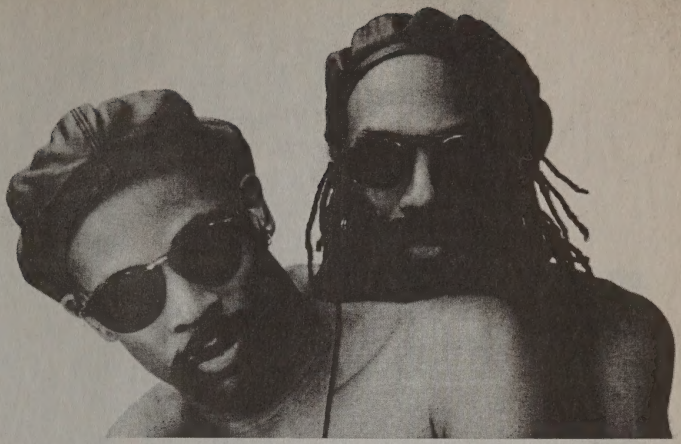
"Hey, excuse me, didn't you get booed off stage at the Apollo?!?" A voice made me look up. At the end of the aisle stood Conrad. He was leaning on a shopping cart, grinning most sneakily.

"Ah...no." I muttered. Wasting no time, I casually turned my cart around. Then quickly, I set off in the opposite direction.

"Oh no you don't!" Conrad's voice was right behind me as I turned the corner. He was in hot pursuit, with the emphasis on "Hot."

It was insane but I started running with the cart. I was hoping security didn't see me.Then I started thinking that maybe I really did want them to see me so they could get this nutcase off my back. Then again maybe having him on my back wasn't such a bad idea!

Daring to look back, I could see he was also running with his cart...and gaining. OOPS! There went my pancake syrup. OH NO! My loaf of bread followed suit. Conrad turned aside to dodge my fall-



en articles. I have to admit, I was enjoying this madness---weaving in and out of the aisles. Finally, in the frozen food department, I lost Conrad. That was close. I grabbed some ice cream and decided to head to the fresh produce. Just as I rounded the corner, I ran smack into Conrad's cart. It made me jump; it was like he came out of nowhere.

"So why were you running from me? I only wanted to talk to you.."

Those dreamy eyes sent shockwaves through me, even though I knew I was dealing with one seriously unstable individual. I pushed his shopping cart with mine.

"I ain't interested in speaking with you, guy. What is your childhood trauma, anyway?" But he wasn't hearing me; he pushed his cart into mine, forcing me back.

"You dropped this." He held out his hand, looking somber. He held my good-luck charm-necklace which must have fallen off during the chase.

"Thanks." I took it.

Conrad just looked at me and went on. Every now and then, we would turn our heads to look at each other. Finally, he made the corner and vanished from sight. I smiled to myself and shook my head.

It was now a month after my little supermarket chase.

They say all good things come to an end, like "The Cosby Show", "Living Single" and "Married With Children". Anyway, my two-year relationship had just fizzled away into nothingness. Now I was trying my best to get back in the groove of things. It wasn't working. Watching TV, listening to the radio, even playing video games...none of the things I normally enjoyed doing brought me any degree of satisfaction. Sighing, I looked out my window. Someone seemed to be moving into the building. When I looked closer, I could hardly believe my eyes. Conrad was helping a fellow move a table up the stairs. Was Conrad moving in here? I didn't know whether to be happy or worried.

After putting on some sneakers, I went downstairs and sat on the stairs in front of the building. Yeah, I wanted to make sure he saw me. I timed everything just right. I waited until I saw Conrad and his friend exit the building. They headed for the car which was parker further up the block. Conrad was carrying two lamps when he returned. He'd taken so long I almost thought he'd split. His eyes bugged out when he looked up and saw me. He recognized me even with the sunglasses I wore.

"What's up?"

He smiled that killer smile. I smiled in response.

"Do you live here?"

"Yeah, I do. Uh---are you moving in?"

Conrad shook his head. "Nah...my uncle is, though..."

I just looked at him. "You know Conrad, we seem to keep bumping into each other..."

"Yeah, funny ain't it?"

"Well...no. Not really."

"Aw c'mon, buddy. I thought you had a sense of humor. The past is just water under the bridge."

"Conrad, you're talking about a whole lot of water." I took off my shades, trying to control the enormous amount of smiling I was doing. Conrad's grinning had gotten to me; it was as if his body was throwing this energy at me!

"Alright Sergio...let me make it all up to you."

"How you gonna do that?"

"Would dinner and a movie do it?"

I gagged. Conrad smiled even brighter.

"Well? Is that a yes?"

"I feel like I'm being set up."

"Maybe you are."

iN TuNe by Jabali Hicks, music editor

TLC "Fanmail" LaFace/Arista (www.tlcfanmail.com)

Fanmail, the third album from the cutting-edge female hip-hop-soul trio TLC is laced with vibrant images of relationships, insecurities, and is a dedication to the fans that stuck by them. "Silly Ho", is the project's first single that really wasn't meant to be. It was a teaser track that was released to radio to reintroduce TLC. "Silly Ho" really doesn't represent what the Fantail record is about. Since their debut in 1992 with the album Oooh, On The TLC Tip and the first single "Ain't Too Proud to Beg," they have the honor of having the first single to hit at video before radio. The 1994 sophomore effort CrazySexyCool was an unqualified success, selling 10x platinum domestically alone and boasting three singles "Creep," "Red Light Special" and "Waterfalls." Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, Tionne T-Boz" Watkins and Rozanda "Chilli" Thomas are indeed icons. Surviving collective bankruptcy, Chilli & producer Dallas Austin had a child together, T-Boz starred in Hype Williams' "Belly", while Left Eye hosted MTV's talent show "The Cut."

TLC wisely chose the formula that works best for them by sticking with familiar producers instead of going the Whitney Houston rout of tapping the "Hottest Producer of the Moment."

Inlisting the talents of Dallas Austin, who produced 8 tracks for **Fanmail**, the package includes "Unpretty," a deep "Waterfalls" type of thematic approach of displaying societies mandate of what pretty is. "Unpretty" is vital to counter the gluttony of images presented by the likes of Foxy Brown's label whore image and words. "Unpretty" is poetry for all senses.

Another one of Dallas Austin's scoarching track is the Prince flavored "Don't Pull Out On Me Yet." T he title says it all.!!!

The track "Born To Die", produced by Jimmy Jam (dedicated to T-Boz's Grandmother), touches on the importance of living your life to the fullest. The newest producer on the project, Shakespeare, did a song "No Scrubs" that is sure to become a TLC anthem. **Fanmail** is destined to be one of those albums you listen to throughout 1999 and beyond.

Olu
"Soul Catcher"
Gee Street/V2
www.Peeps.com

Born 24 years ago in the city of New York, Olu grew up in Harlem and began in music lessons at the age of four. While still a child, he won a spot in the world famous Boys Choir of Harlem and toured extensively throughout the U.S. and abroad.

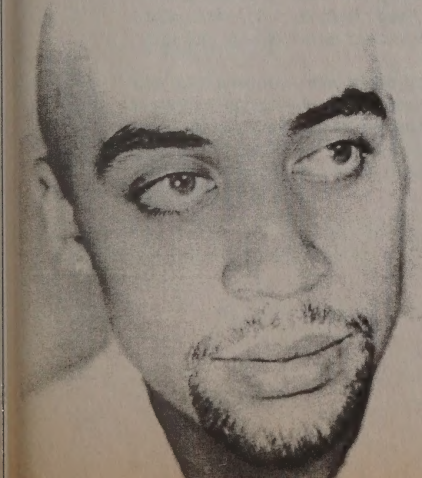
After spending years honing his vocal talents as well as his skills on guitar, drums, saxophone, piano, and bass, Olu met Stuart Matthewman (musician, songwriter, and producer for Sade, Sweetback and Maxwell).

Olu's debut album, **Soul Catcher** features a number of Matthewman-produced tracks as well as many written, produced, engineered, arranged and performed by Olu himself.

"My World" comes on hard with lines like "You and Me don't need anyone else, but my world won't let me go." The simplicity of his lyrics are so unique and timely that they are applicable to anyone's situation, be it the drug dealer or the married man.

Equally at home on the Uptown streets as he is chillin' in the mountains, Olu's songs have a warm, authentic quality that are both passionate and contemplative; personal yet universal.

"Why do people fall in love so madly, then leave each other standing all alone?"is one of the killer lyrics from the generously sensitive song "Sista Why." Olu's delivery of the tender nuances of this song have seemingly been channeled through Sting. And that's not a bad thing. Imagine, if you will, Olu as the black Sting; blue eyed soul from a black man. What a concept. Draw a line from the golden age of soul music, and at the end you'll find Olu. Perfection personified.



JANET • BRIAN McKNIGHT • MARIAH CAREY • MARY J. BLIGE
BET
best of planet groove
MYA FEATURING SISQO • NEXT • JON B • ERYKAH BADU
LSG AND MANY MORE

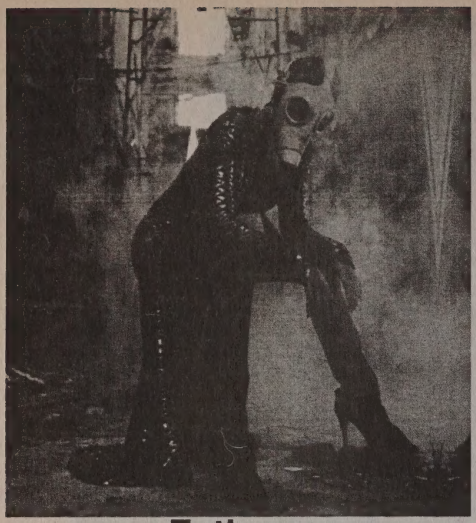
BET
"Best Of Planet Groove"
Fully Loaded/Virgin Records
WWW.VIRGINURBAN.COM

Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Brian McKnight, Erykah Badu, SWV and Boys II Men are among the contributors to **Best of Planet Groove**, a knockout compilation coming from Fully Loaded/Virgin Records.

This 15-Track album, due to hit stores in early March, ushers in a new musicventure between Black Entertainment Television and a major record label: Best of Planet Groove is the first installment in a series of planned productions by Virgin Records and BET's Fully Loaded record label subsidiary.

The album launches the collaboration on a highly auspicious note: It features the cream of the crop among contemporary soul and urban stars (an acclaimed group of artists whose wide ranging talents are reflected by an enormous tally of prestigious awards and smash hits.)

Janet opens the set with her offering of "I Get Lonely". Sparkle & R. Kelly give it up with the relationship anthem "Be Careful", Mary J. Blige, featuring Lil' Kim, throws down with "I Can Love You". Basically, all the jams from 1998 have been faithfully delivered in this package.



Esthero
"Breath From Another"
WORK!
(www.workgroupnet.com)

"This music was the lamb that made a lion out of me," says the vocalist Esthero of her namesake album. Esthero & partner Doc, sounding much like 1/4 Everything But The Girl, 1/4 Sade & 1/2 Roni Size, are on to a texturized sound that is not synthetic and not homoginized; just good Canadian music. On the strength, word of mouth has them selling 1,000 CD's a week. This means their shit IS the shit!!---an eclectic jumbled blur of mixed delicacies inclusive of rap, trip-hop, acid jazz, r&b, reggae and soul.

Esthero & Doc have forged a musical synergy where violence is vulnerability, reason is abstraction, a lover's caress hides a knife, alienantion bears the seeds of unity and the soothing song of a woman child is carried aloft the wings of a madman's music.

The album opener, "Breath From Another"(featuring rhymes by Shug & Messah), is all about mile-high shag carpet & headphones. It's songs like this that are to be showcased during all smart dinner parties. Cosmo's are liberally pouring while the jazzy opening of "Half a World Away" tenderly pulls you into an embrace of calculated knowledge of things best left alone. Meanwhile, "Superheroes" plunges headfirst into a layered cosmic Roy Ayers vibe that is all good. For real! "That Girl" conjures images of old school Sade with the guitar & trumpet interacting with Esthero's voice and rendering this listener boundless.

Wendy & Lisa
"Girl Bros."
WDM.

From the minds of the women who did a majority of the writing of some of Prince's biggest hits including "Purple Rain" comes **Girl Bros.** The Revolution may never be televised, but it has resurfaced the former of guitarist & keyboardist for Prince's band, bringing an extremely sensitive and thought-provoking album that is dedicated to Wendy's brother Jonathan, who sadly died from a Heroin overdose while touring as the drummer for the Smashing Pumpkins.

Beginning with the warm & fuzzy bass line of "Reaching One," Wendy's vocal welcomes the listener to become part of the song with lyrics like " I go on and on counting backwards from 100 light years you've been gone, never reaching one." "I Will" is a stark, non-imposing guitar based song that boasts lines "I'll will your lover the strength to stand 'cause she's your baby's mother, she held your hand."

This album is not just a project focusing on sadness, but is one of hope for anyone who is left to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of death. Therapeutic by nature, calming in effect, "Bring You Back" is beautiful in it's simplicity. "It feels nobody feels like I do, what could I do to bring you back to me?" says it all.

"All I Wonder/Anyway" opens with a haunting vocal and then breaks into a Funky groove that brings the vibe of "Under The Cherry Moon's" "Mountains"-type of groove to mind. Suffice it to say that Prince's sound is greatly missing the contribution these two producer songwriters had to offer.

CATCH THE SPIRIT

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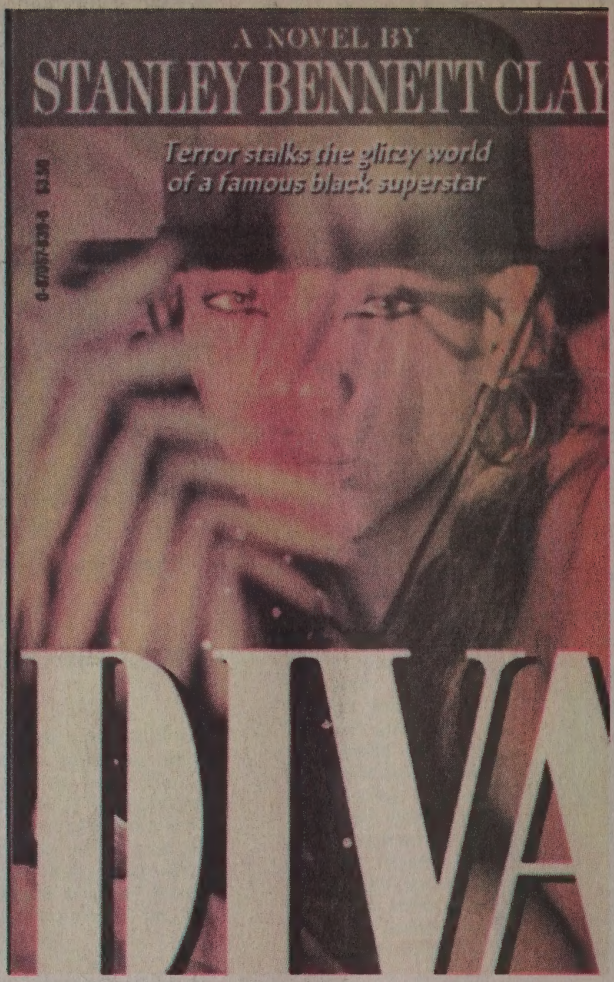

Lights! Camera! Murder!

Beautiful, talented Ida Lake was known as "The Diva" to her millions of fans when she reigned as Hollywood's black singing sensation of the '40s. Her career---and her sanity---collapsed after the suspicious deaths of the husband she adored and the daughter she worshipped and, haunted by rumors of "un-American" activities, Ida took refuge abroad. Two decades later, she has been coaxed into a comeback as the star of a Broadway musical. But tragedy stalks Ida Lake once again as a mysterious web of intrigue, sex, scandal and murder envelops the show. In DIVA, author Stanley Bennett Clay captures the glamour---and suspense---that is show business. Now available through mail order.

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People First

Meet the AIDS Prevention Team

We have worked hard to build a better organization for you. And while we are still growing, we understand that people come first. You deserve an agency that represents the best that we have to offer. Look for many changes over the next few months. But one thing will never change. People always come first. If you live in the L.A. area, you owe it to yourself to see what we have for you. We're the AIDS Prevention Team, and we're here for you.

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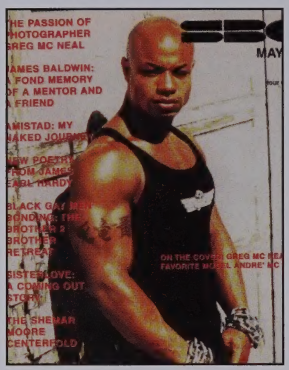

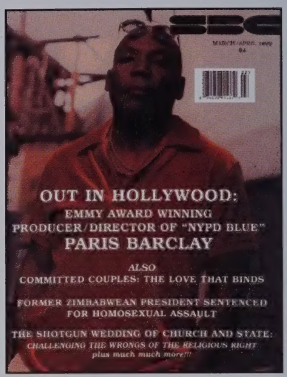
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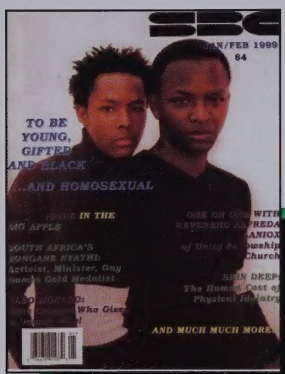

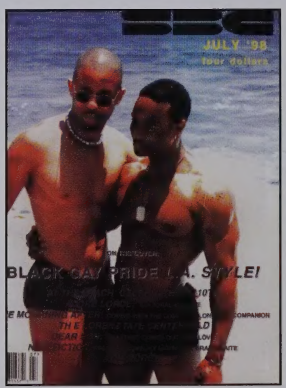

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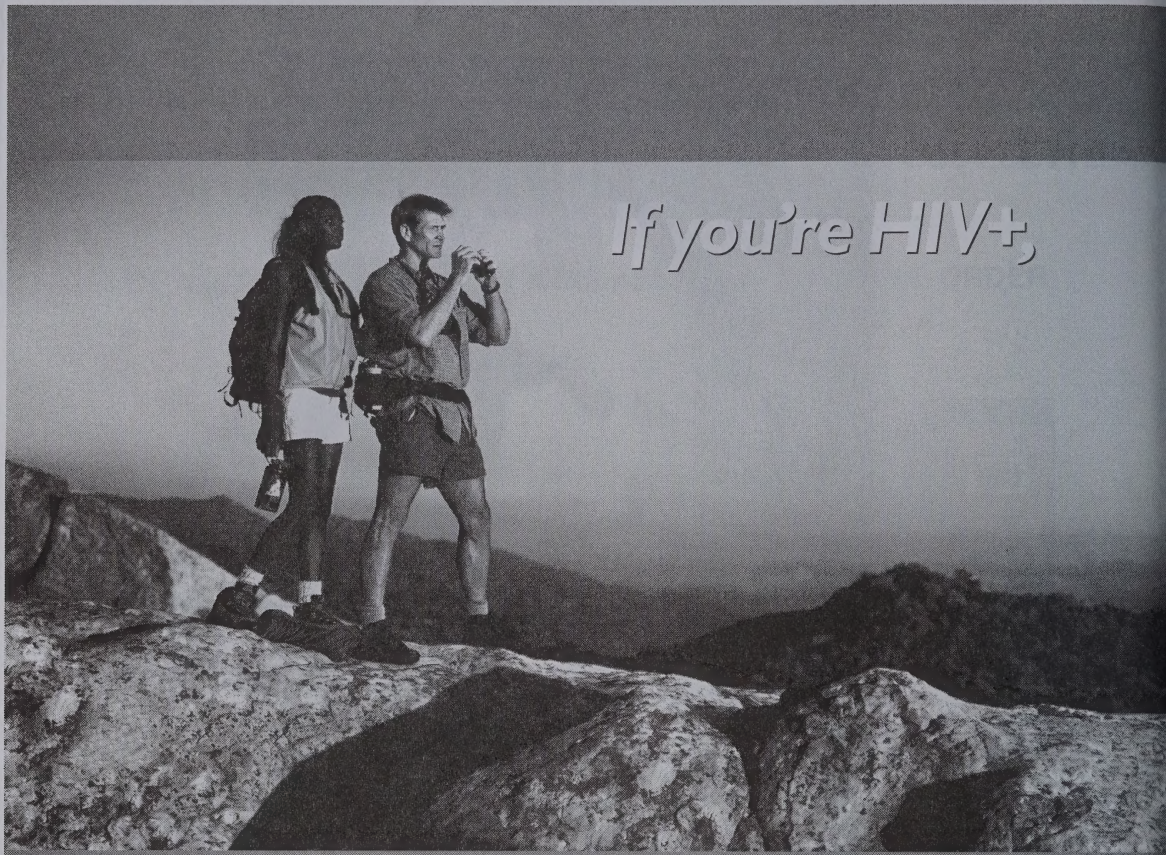

Being HIV+ isn't easy.

It's a daily challenge that can take all you've got. It helps to have an advantage -- to lighten your load and keep you going. Federal healthcare guidelines now call for including a potent protease inhibitor as part of combination treatments to fight HIV. Consider these reasons to make the protease inhibitor CRIXIVAN the foundation of your treatment regimen.

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 + T cell count. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

New NIH research showed people taking CRIXIVAN in triple therapy lived longer and experienced fewer opportunistic infections.

Recent year-long research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (Protocol ACTG 320) studied over 1,000 patients and confirmed results from another study.

The group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. This reduction was significant enough for the NIH to recommend the study be stopped, so that all participants could benefit from the findings. Because the study was ended early, there was insufficient data to determine the statistical impact of CRIXIVAN on survival.

CRIXIVAN in triple therapy continues to hold serum viral load down below the limit of detection at the one year mark.

In a separate, ongoing landmark study, over 90% of the 31 patients receiving CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their HIV serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks (as measured by available tests; the virus may still be present in other organ systems).

Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one year mark.

CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated.

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. There are side effects associated with protease inhibitors in general and CRIXIVAN in particular. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems. There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

As with other protease inhibitors, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Please read the following page for detailed information on side effects and dosing.

CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.

CRIXIVAN is the number one choice of doctors.*

CRIXIVAN is prescribed for more patients than any other protease inhibitor. With this commitment to CRIXIVAN comes a commitment to product improvements and further research in the battle against HIV. CRIXIVAN is being studied in a broad range of patients and in many different combinations. Ask your doctor for the latest news and developments.

* IMS America; 3/96 - 2/98.

Focus on the rest of your life.

Learn all you can about HIV therapy. Talk with your doctor. Stay informed and stay the course. With viral load below the limit of detection and an increase in CD4 T-cells, it's easier to look forward to the future with confidence.

Please read the following page for more detailed information about CRIXIVAN.

Remember to ask your doctor about CRIXIVAN.

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CRIXIVAN® (indinavir sulfate) Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, you should read the information included with CRIXIVAN each time you receive your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this information does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays." If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:
   - dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   - corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?**

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Isoniazid (INH)
DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)	ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)

BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both
the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this page alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

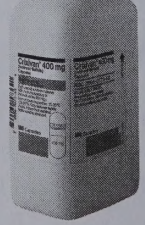
Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain,fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: abdominal swelling; inflammation of the kidneys; increased fat appearing in areas such as the neck, abdomen, and back; change in skin color; severe skin reactions; hair loss; crystals in the urine; and allergic reactions.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.



How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°F-86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication is prescribed for a particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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CRIXIVAN® (indinavir sulfate) Capsules

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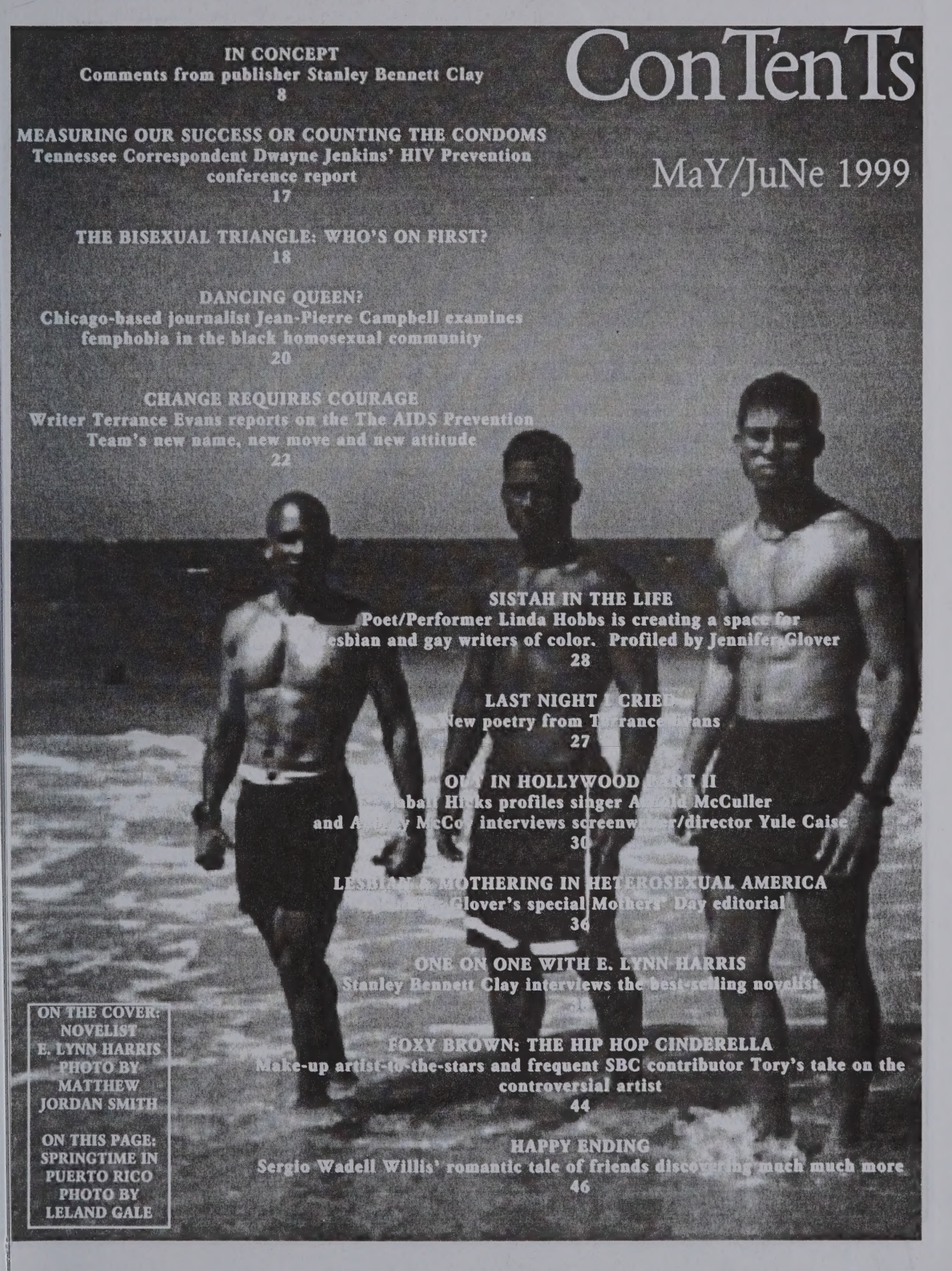


ON THE COVER:
NOVELIST
E. LYNN HARRIS
PHOTO BY
MATTHEW
JORDAN SMITH

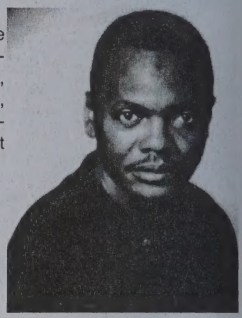
ON THIS PAGE:
SPRINGTIME IN
PUERTO RICO
PHOTO BY
LELAND GALE

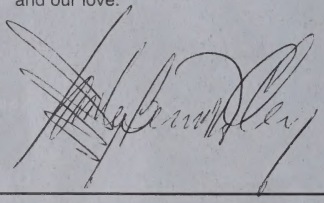
in CoNCePT.

My cherished readers, a good friend recently e-mailed this beautiful Napalese good luck mantra to me. I feel honored and blessed to be able to share it with you:

1. Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.
2. Memorize your favorite poem.
3. Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have or sleep all you want.
4. When you say, "I love you", mean it.
5. When you say, "I'm sorry", look the person in the eye.
6. Be engaged at least six months before you get married.
7. Believe in love at first sight.
8. Never laugh at anyone's dreams. People who don't have dreams don't have much.
9. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt but it's the only way to live life completely.
10. In disagreements, fight fairly. No name calling.
11. Don't judge people by their relatives.
12. Talk slowly but think quickly.
13. When someone asks you a question you don't want to answer, smile and ask, "Why do you want to know?"
14. Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
16. Say "bless you" when you hear someone sneeze.
17. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
18. Remember the three R's: Respect for self; Respect for others; Responsibility for all your actions.
19. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
20. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
21. Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice.
22. Marry a man/woman you love to talk to. As you get older, their conversational skills will be as important as any other.
23. Spend some time alone.
24. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
25. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
26. Read more books and watch less TV.
27. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll get to enjoy it a second time.
28. Trust in God but lock your car.
29. A loving atmosphere in your home is so important. Do all you can to create a tranquil harmonious home.
30. In disagreements with loved ones, deal with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
31. Read between the lines.
32. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
33. Be gentle with the earth.
34. Pray. There's immeasurable power in it.
35. Never interrupt when you are being flattered.
36. Mind your own business.
37. Don't trust a man/woman who doesn't close his/her eyes when you kiss.
38. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.
39. If you make a lot of money, put it to use helping others while you are living. That is wealth's greatest satisfaction.
40. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a stroke of luck.
41. Learn the rules then break some.
42. Remember that the best relationship is one where your love for each other is greater than your need for each other.
43. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
44. Remember that your character is your destiny.
45. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

I hope we all learn from the Columbine High School tragedy. Our children---nieces, nephews, sons and daughters, neighbors, strangers, gangbangers, prodigies, homosexual, black, white, yellow and brown---need our involvement and our love.





SBC

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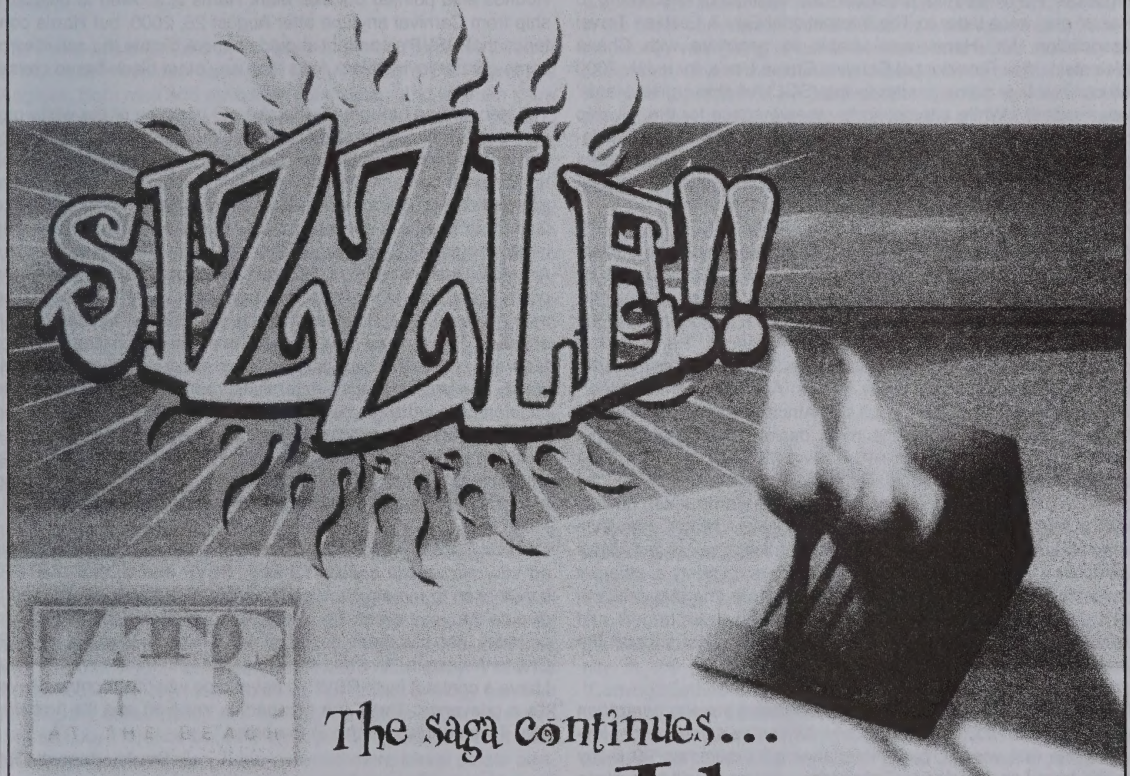

The saga continues...

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'WHITE' GAY TRAVEL COMPANY BLOCKS BLACK SAME GENDER-LOVING CRUISE PLANS, REKINDLING THE DEBATE OVER THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE AFRICENTRIC HOMOSEXUAL COALITION

San Francisco---In what has been described as "travel apartied" by black homosexual cruise promoter Mark Harris, a formal grievance has been lodged by Harris against Minneapolis-based gay travel organizer RSVP and it's president Charlie Rounds. According to Harris' grievance letter to The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association, Mr. Harris was unable to negotiate with Cherie Weinstein, Vice President of Carnival Cruise Lines, for a July 2000 African Heritage same gender-loving (SGL) full ship cruise. Harris' letter stated: " While attempting to reserve space for the full ship charter, I discovered that RSVP had entered into [a] very exclusionary contract with Carnival Cruise Lines. This contract prohibits Carnival from booking another GAY full ship charter cruise to anyone, anywhere six months before or six months after."

According to Harris' grievance letter, he spoke to RSVP president Charlie Rounds on Monday, March 22, 1999 and was told by Rounds that RSVP services the needs of ALL the gay community. However, Harris' own research determined that less than 2% of the travelers on RSVP cruises are African-American. Harris further contends that since RSVP cruises are overwhelmingly geared toward the white gay sensibility, African American same gender-loving travelers, who desire a full ship Africentric cruise, are denied heritage fellowship during the most desirable summer months. RSVP's gay cruise is scheduled in May, which, according to their exclusionary contract, would not allow any other full ship gay cruise to sail before November. According to Harris' letter, he was told by Rounds to "use another cruise line", but Harris' grievance letter states that "the specific time and location of our cruise allows us no flexibility of choosing other dates, or utilizing a different cruise line. Royal Caribbean is the other cruise line that sails out of the Los Angeles pier. Royal Caribbean however targets and sells to the corporate market. Their policy does not support the type of cruise which SONGMASTER produces."

SONGMASTER, Harris' San Francisco-based travel organization which launched it's highly successful Africentric same-gender loving cruise last year, is currently planning it's summer '99 5-day cruise from Los Angeles to Ensanada, Mexico. It will take place Monday, June 28th thru Friday, July 2, returning travelers to Los Angeles in time to enjoy the weekend festivities of the 11th Annual ATB Malibu Beach Party/L.A. Black Gay Pride Festivities during the 4th of July weekend, an event that draws upwards of 6,000 black homosexual men and women and their friends. This year's cruise is not affected by the dispute.

In an April 27, 1999 phone conversation with RSVP's Charlie Rounds, Rounds disputed Harris' claim that less than 2% of their cruise clientele is black. "We've never counted people by national origin," he stated, "and I've never seen Mark Harris on one of our cruises, so I don't know where he would get those statistics from."

Although RSVP's contract with Carnival is standard business procedure, Harris' claim that the needs of African American travelers are not being met by RSVP and that they have no right to block a gathering at any time of any African American cruise, renders RSVP's contract with Carnival inapplicable to SONGMASTER. But Rounds defends that RSVP is indeed inclusive: "We received an award from an African American publication for our outreach to the African American community. We reach out to all aspects of our community---the women's community, the Latino community, the African American community, the leather community. We don't believe in discrimination. We are not a white only gay company."

Rounds also pointed out that Mark Harris is allowed to charter a ship from Carnival anytime after August 28, 2000, but Harris contends that RSVP's contract should no more dictate the activities of same gender-loving black folks than any other black-based cruise.

The debate has brought up the age old dilemma of the white gay community's blatant exclusion of black same gender-loving people, culture and socialization. Each year, fewer and fewer black homosexual persons are involving themselves in the mainstream gay movement. Black participation in what are perceived as White Gay Pride Events is down to a trickle and Black Gay Pride events in Washington D.C., Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, Oakland, Atlanta, St. Louis and Boston are drawing tens of thousands of black-first homosexuals in need of celebrating their Africentricity above, beyond and/or in concert with their sexual nature. Black same gender-loving businesses, cruises, retreats, festivals, club events, magazines, newspapers, political organizations, investment clubs, fraternities, sororities, and economic development networks generate millions of black dollars recycled back into the black community, making the Africentric Homosexual Coalition a force to be reckoned with. The Africentric Homosexual Coalition has self-determined to exist as a separate nation working alongside the Mainstream Gay community, not as a part of it.

Carnival Cruises, which has found itself in the middle, having hosted very successful cruises for both RSVP and SONGMASTER, has chosen to remain mum on the subject. "If this is going to be a dispute that may eventually end up in court or something, I should probably not comment on it." stated Carnival Cruise Line V.P. Cherie Weinstein. "I've had conversations with Mark several times. I have a contract [with RSVP]. I have to do what the contract says. It's a grievance. There are two parties involved and it's probably best if we not discuss this in the press."

---Stanley Bennett Clay

100 BLACK GAY MEN PROTEST AND TESTIFY AT L.A. COUNTY COMMISSION ON HIV HEALTH SERVICES

Los Angeles, Califonria---After taking a few years off from the activist scene, I was called back to active duty. On April 8, 1999, there was a protest gathering at the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Health Services. The goal was to get 100 black gay men together to have the commission declare a state of emergency in the black community. Although only approximately 40 were there physically, the rest were represented by funeral programs of brothers who have died from AIDS. I had planned to just

go to the meeting, observe and report what happened. The next thing I knew, a form requesting to speak to the commission was being placed in my hand. Within minutes I found myself in front of the mic talking about the death of my best friend last week.

I wanted the commission to know that we don't have David Geffens and Elton Johns stepping forward and donating millions of dollars to our organizations. We need to be properly funded to do the work in our communities. Our people don't often have the luxury of volunteering, folks need to be paid for their time. Enough about me, let me tell you about some people we should be very proud of.

The event was organized by Christopher Smith, Executive Director of the AIDS Prevention Team, and Greg Smith of AIDS Project Los Angeles. Both men addressed the commission and let them know in no uncertain terms that we as black gay men were not going to stand quietly by and watch our friends die. We will hold the commission responsible for the decisions they make.

Some of the most emotional moments of the public testimony came from men who have had lovers die in their arms. Those men who live in the San Fernando Valley made it passionately clear to both the commission and the audience that there is a dire need for services "on the other side of the Hollywood sign". It was pointed out that the only drop-in center for people with HIV who live in The Valley has closed down. There have been efforts to have satellite offices from Los Angeles service the needs of People of Color in The Valley, but so far these efforts have been rebuffed as "the need" has been deemed to be only in South Central L.A. Funds are not being supplied to the San Fernando Valley in the misconception of where People of Color live.

A Latino brother, Alexander Gonzales, pulled no punches when he told members of the council "If you are not willing or able to do the job, then get up and let someone who can take your seat!"

Speaking against the rhetoric that tends to pit women and children against gay men in the distribution of funds were community activist Wendell Carmichael and Richard Harris. Harris, with his twin brother Ron, owns and operated the Lucy Florence Coffeehouse in Hollywood. He made the choice analogy between running the coffee house and running the commission. He stated that as Lucy Florence became more popular, they didn't cut back on services and supplies. If they needed more sweet potato pies, they went and got more. In answer to the notion of there not being enough of the pie to go around, Richard's statement, "I'm here to tell you, you need to buy more sweet potato pies: brought thunderous applause.

Addressing the issue that in funding "gay" associated organizations they were not reaching all men who have sex with men, Chaz Atkins of APT and Cleo Manago, founder of The AMASSI Institute, both pointed out that "the black community is not monolithic." Some identify as black, others as African-American or Afro-American. Some identify as gay, others as same gender loving. Still others shun any labels whatsoever. These two gentlemen wanted to make the commission aware that the organizations that aren't necessarily gay identified need to receive funding as well because there are men who are in need of service who won't set foot near anything with 'gay' in the title or that is too gay-indentified. We men who stepped forward to speak were primarily gay or same gender loving identified, but wanted it made clear that we were speaking up for the entire community. Although we, as black gay or same gender loving identified men, were addressing our concerns at this time, we were also standing in solidarity with the Latino, Asian, Native American and women's community whose needs have not been adequately met as well.

After some minor technicalities with board rules and regulations, the motion was declared and the decision made to go before the L.A. Board of Supervisors and have a state of emergency declared in the black community. Some concerns were raised about where the money was going to come from and who would make up the crisis team. One of the council members pointed out that we would still have a problem if we have people from DC or Atlanta come here and they don't know about the People of Color in The Valley. She wanted to strongly recommend that whoever comes here should meet with people in the community who know what the need is and where services are needed.

Congratulations, brothers, we did it! This is just the first step. There are many more steps to be taken. There is much work to be done. I encourage everyone to get involved in some way. You can make a difference. Now, let's stay on top of things and remain proactive and not reactive.

(The AIDS Prevention Team can be reached at 323.964.7820)

---Parnell Marcano

INDEPENDENCE '99: CHICAGO PLANS 1ST ANNUAL BLACK PRIDE CELEBRATION

Chicago, Illinois---Chicago, which will be the sight of the 13th Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference February 17-20, 2000, will host this year it's first annual Black Pride Festival, "Independence '99", over the 4th of July weekend - July 1 - 5. This weekend will be an annual gathering celebrating the Black Lesbian, Gay, Bi-affectionate and Transgender community in the Windy City. The theme for this year's event is "Coming2GetherAs1". Independence '99 will feature activities for the entire Black LesBiGayTrans community including live performances, cultural events, seminars and a festival picnic. Evening activities will include parties hosted by various social organizations and bars/clubs from the community.

The official host hotel is the Hyatt University Village, 625 S. Ashland Avenue (downtown Chicago). Reservations can be made @ 312.243.7200 or Toll Free @ 800.233.1234, ask for the Chocolate City rate. The official Chicago Pride Committee Information desk will be located at the hotel on the Conference Level. Weekend schedules, souvenir books and other information will be on hand.

The official weekend activities at the host hotel will kick off with an evening of cultural performances on Thursday July 1, followed by the Opening Reception and Kickoff Party on Friday July 2, continuing on Saturday July 3 with seminars on topics ranging from spirituality, sexuality, personal finance, health/wellness, a media

reception, relationships, politics for men, women and youth. One of the highlights of the weekend will be the Independence '99 Festival Picnic on Lake Michigan (Wellington Clock Tower @ Irving Park Rd. & N. Lake Shore Drive) on Sunday July 4 with food, entertainment, recreation, music and dancing for all. All official committee hosted events are free of charge.

The body of the planning committee is formed by Chicago's Black LesBiGayTrans community groups, who have come together to host men and women from across the nation in the Windy City. Chicago will also host The Taste of Chicago and a major fireworks extravaganza during this weekend. Bus Tours are already planned from D.C. and Detroit.

For more information call 773.288.2078 or e-mail chicagoblackpride@yahoo.com. Also check the Chicago Black Pride Committee web site for weekend schedule updates at http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Café/2381/.

KICK MAGAZINE CELEBRATES FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY DURING HOTTER THAN JULY CELEBRATION

Detroit, Michigan---Many have come and gone, but Kick Magazine has stood the test of time. Founded in 1994 by publisher Curtis Lipscomb, Kick has established itself as a mainstay in the Africentric Homosexual community. The Detroit-based publication will take time out during this year's 4th-annual Hotter Than July!, Detroit's Black Gay Pride Celebration, to commemorate the occasion of their five-year anniversary.

The celebration will kick off on Friday, July 23, 1999, with a black gay media reception at the Pontchartrain Hotel. Scheduled to address the crowd, and receive the first-ever Kick Conscience of the Community Awards, are Stanley Bennett Clay (publisher of SBC Magazine), Charlene Cothran (publisher of Venus Magazine), Johnny Jenkins, (co-founder of DBGPride, Inc./Hotter Than July!) and Todd Shaw (professor of black studies at the University of Illinois).

Kick will also take time out to recognize five special contributors from across the country---Belasco (from Los Angeles, California), Chris Cushman (from Toronto, Ontario), Jack Gorro (from Detroit, Michigan), Hopeton Stewart (from Berkeley, California) and Robert Wesley (from Washington, DC), who have kicked it with the Midwestern publication from the start.

"I must say I feel proud to be standing on the threshold of five years of service to my community," said Lipscomb, "and with their continued support, I see many more years on the horizon."

CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO HONOR ROSA PARKS WITH HOLIDAY

Los Angeles, California---As a result of a Black History Month Salute and Birthday Celebration honoring noted activist Rosa Parks, Daphne "James" Bradford, the editor of syndicated radio show Inside Gospel, is asking folks to participate in a drive to make Ms. Parks' birthday a national holiday. The goal of the campaign is for people to write to their state representative and gain support to commemorate the mother of the Civil Rights movement. The Inside Gospel campaign began on April 15. For more information call 323-290-2166. Inside Gospel can be heard in over 125 US markets.

JAMAICAN MULTI-SEXUAL ORGANIZATION CALLS GOVERNMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

Kingston, Jamaica---The Jamaica Forum of Lesbians (J-FLAG), All-Sexuals and Gays notes with interest some of the conditions attached to the decision of the United Kingdom to grant British citizenship to nationals of its dependent territories in the Caribbean. Especially noteworthy is the condition, reported in the Jamaican press on 1999 March 17, that the territories will be required to repeal their laws prohibiting certain homosexual acts.

The requirement, which is in keeping with European Union and other international standards, should be of interest to Jamaica's political leaders. The Jamaican government, through its minister of National Security and Justice, the Hon. K.D. Knight, has made it clear that the country will not change its laws regarding certain homosexual acts. In a Reuters report of 1998 December 16, Mr. Knight stated: "There's no plan by the government to repeal the laws relevant to homosexual activities. The law is founded on a moral imperative which has not changed."

J-FLAG is cautioning the government that such hard line positions are untenable in a world of increased interdependence between and among nations. J-FLAG maintains that by refusing to repeal the laws that make sex between consenting adult males illegal, the government is depriving many of its citizens of their fundamental rights.

J-FLAG remains firm in its conviction that consensual sex between mature persons of the same sex has no lesser or greater effect on the morals of society than consensual sex between heterosexual adults. The organization is also concerned about the state's consistent legislation of morality. If homosexual acts between adults are criminal because they are immoral, then adultery and fornication should likewise be criminal, since the Church deems them immoral.

The nation's legislators must evaluate the laws relating to homosexuality and make the amendments that will guarantee the human rights of Jamaica's gay citizens. If this is not done, the country may risk losing out on aid packages that are tied to human rights records. Gay rights are becoming increasingly important to many of the countries that provide developmental aid to Jamaica. Considering that Jamaica is so dependent on foreign aid, it must deal with the matter of homosexuality voluntarily before it is forced, like the British dependent territories, to do so.

Jamaica Forum of Lesbians, All-Sexuals & Gays can be contacted at telephone: 876 978-1954 Fax: 876 978-7876 address: P.O. Box 1152, Kingston 8, Jamaica http://village.fortunecity.com/garland/704

None but ourselves can free our minds - Bob Marley

Gay Pride

Gay Power

Gay Passion

We celebrate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community and ALL its diversity!

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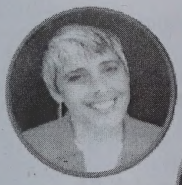
– Marvin K. Carter



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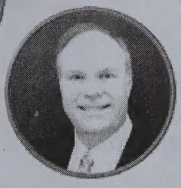
Women's and Human Resources Relations
Phone Extension 130



Chuck Cole
Chief Executive
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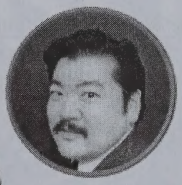

Donald Masuda
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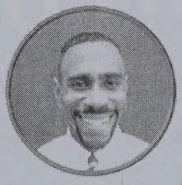

Marvin Carter
African-American Relations
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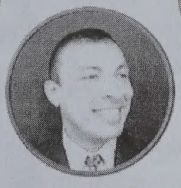

Angel Vladimir Oliveros
Latino Relations
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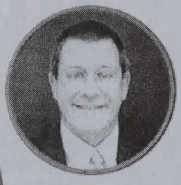

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VIRACEPT IS POWERFUL It's tough on HIV. In many people, VIRACEPT lowered the amount of HIV in the blood to levels below the limit of detection of the test used, and substantially increased CD4 cell counts after 24 weeks of triple combination therapy. (The clinical significance of changes in viral RNA levels in blood has not been established. The virus may still be present in other organ systems.) **VIRACEPT IS EASY TO LIVE WITH** Take it three times a day with your normal meals or light snacks. **VIRACEPT IS GENERALLY WELL TOLERATED** People treated with VIRACEPT may experience some side effects; the most common is diarrhea of moderate or greater intensity in 20% of people in clinical trials. **VIRACEPT WORKS** It's indicated for the treatment of HIV infection when anti-HIV drug therapy is warranted. It is not yet known whether taking VIRACEPT will help you live longer

WHAT YOUR **PROTEASE INHIBITOR** CAN BE:

or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free **1-888-VIRACEPT** or visit **www.agouron.com**. (Refer to the important information on the next page.)

VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate

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POWERFUL AND
EASY TO LIVE WITH.

VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate

Information for Patients About VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)
Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should <u>not</u> take with VIRACEPT:
- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute® Cardioquin® Quinidex® and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

  Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

  This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:
- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

  These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

  If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:
- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Viramune® (nevirapine)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

  VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)

  The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

  The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight Kg	Body Weight Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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Issued 11/13/97

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ARE WE "MEASURING OUR SUCCESS" OR COUNTING THE CONDOMS BEFORE THEY'RE USED?

a conference overview by Dwayne Jenkins, Tennessee Correspondent

The 1999 Community Planning Leadership Summit for HIV Prevention was held at the Hilton & Towers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from Wednesday March 24th through Sunday the 27th. It was sponsored by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), and the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC). This year's conference theme, "Measuring Our Success", was incorporated to evaluate past achievements, and also focus on where members were going in their individual HIV prevention Community Planning Groups (CPG) in the future. The workshops were organized in four tracks: Parity, Inclusion & Representation; Managing the Process: Leadership for Community Planning; Effective Interventions; and Steps to Community Planning.

Now that all that was said, you may be asking yourself, what the hell is a Community Planning Group? CPG's are generally made up of persons affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS, community representatives, and volunteers throughout a state or region whose experience should enhance the prevention planning process. The mission of a CPG is to develop a comprehensive HIV Prevention Plan for their State based on the needs assessment data from each of the surrounding regions of the State. The roles may vary, but once a group is developed, it should generally: (1) Review epidemiological surveillance, evaluation, and behavioral & cost effectiveness data, (2) identify unmet HIV prevention needs within a defined population, (3) prioritize HIV Prevention need by region, target populations, prioritizing strategies and intervention, (4) identify and provide technical assistance and capacity development, (5) consider how counseling, testing & referral, partner notification, early intervention, primary care, and other HIV related services are addressed within the comprehensive HIV prevention Plan. The CDC is the federal agency principally responsible for supporting HIV prevention efforts across the country. Thus, receipt of federal funding for prevention programming has been contingent on compliance with a variety of requirements, and the production of such a plan completes one of those needed. CPG's are a result of a grant that is awarded by the CDC to State Health Departments across the country. Criteria for nomination, recruitment, and selection of CPG members are specific to each group.

Confused yet? Well you are not the only one! Although this process may lead you to believe that it's full of crap, it is actually a very important tool in HIV/AIDS prevention to understand.

One of the questions asked by some of the Same Gender Loving (SGL) African American men present was "am I really part of this process?" The workshop that focused on this question had split answers. On one side different states reported that they had a large number of black gay males involved, and on the other side states reported that those black men who were at the table usually don't disclose their sexuality, thus leaving our community issues and interventions inadequately addressed. Another workshop, targeted toward our transgender family members, also touched on the same issues of parity, inclusion and representation.

One thing is for sure, mentoring new members to replace those SGL brothers and sisters whose term is up is critical. Not being "at the table" is always a concern for our community, but the other issue to consider is our readiness to have appropriate SGL people available to fit once there is a space. It is time to seek and empower the new blood of our future to join in this community planning process. It is also important to note that having representation at the table without proper knowledge and understanding of this process should no longer be tolerated. We must cover our asses (no pun intended) and teach our youth everything they should know. There is a wealth of information in our community in terms of HIV Prevention, Risk Reduction and Modification. We must continue to develop interventions that educate and promote each of us to save ourselves. Counting the condoms we give out should not qualify anyone as a warrior against new HIV infections. It is simply not enough.

Okay, I have officially stepped off the soap box, folks. Quiet as its kept, if you are like me and have attended three or more conferences already this year, you may be in the conference and meeting overload. Even with that, I wouldn't have passed up the opportunity to network and share information with the variety of people and resources that were available. Although many of the black gay, bisexual and transgender persons that attended this conference stated that they were also tired of meetings, they all said that they were ready, willing, and able to do the work that is necessary to help maintain healthy, productive, and visionary men and women for our survival. That, in itself, is a measure of success.

THE BISEXUAL TRIANGLE: WHO'S ON FIRST?

by Luther Mace

As same gender loving men and women many of us know what it's like to be misunderstood. Often our feelings are dismissed and cast in a category of confusion, and our relationships are reduced to gross acts of perversion by various factions of society. The homosexual and heterosexual groups are at odds over implied moral codes that govern our society. Stuck in between the bickering adversaries are those who may have no particular allegiance with either contingent: the self-identified bisexual. In many cases, a bisexual person is likely to receive flack from both the homosexual and heterosexual communities for their feelings and the manner in which they may choose to handle their relationships.

"There's a lack of positive bisexual images [in our culture]," states David Rotcheck, member of the Board of Directors for the Bisexual Resource Center out of Boston, "We have very strong heterosexual and lesbian and gay identities. When you identify as bisexual, people just don't know how to classify it. They think that you're switching your orientation all the time or that you have to be unfaithful."

Bisexuality, by definition, characterizes the potential to feel sexually attracted to and engage in sexual or sensual relationships with individuals of either gender. According to 'Father of Psychology' Sigmund Freud "all individuals are born bisexual." The degree of attraction a bisexual person may feel for either sex is not necessarily equal, and may vary over time. Furthermore, bisexual persons are not any more compelled to act on their attractions than someone who is straight or same gender loving. But as with anything in life there are few guarantees. Who you fall in love with can be as surprising as the number of people.

"I care about both of them," declares Michael. "He gives me certain things she can't.
She gives me certain things he can't." Michael self-identifies as a bisexual involved in what he describes as one of the most worthwhile situations in the world. He's in love with two people simultaneously and is not the least bit jarred by the gender difference. "It's not that deep. Love is love, right?"

Yes. One can formidably argue that love, for all intends and purposes, is simply love. But is love really the sole issue? "Let me know what's up," attests Racquel. "This is my life. I don't give a fuck what you do with yours, but when it involves me---that's a whole 'nother story." Racquel, 28, was devastated when she found out her boyfriend of two years had been seeking sexual comforts outside of their relationship. Her devastation turned to anger when she learned through her own sleuthing that her significant other was spending his extra time at gay clubs and bars. "At that point I was just praying I didn't catch anything."

Concerns regarding the transmission of STD's, particularly AIDS and HIV, in the heterosexual community have been acute since the first case male-to-female transmission was reported among women. However, according to the latest statistics released from the Centers for Disease Control, of the 25,362 cases reported from the 28 states reporting, 3,062 women were infected by sex partners who were IV drug users as opposed to the 798 infected by bisexual partners. Within the African-American community, sex with IV drug users was the cause of infection in 1,861 black women versus 469 women infected by bisexual men.

Successful relationships today must be built on a paradigm of trust. Truly knowing your partner is essential in establishing a bridge of communication. Unfortunately, in many bisexual triangles, all parties aren't always aware of their partner's bisexuality. "The main reason I am not open [about my sexuality]," offers Malik, "is because I am bi curious and still flirting with the idea...I am more attracted to women and my attraction to men only extends to muscle men. With guys, it's purely physical."

Finding the courage, however, to come out to your partner as bisexual can be extremely difficult. Fear of rejection, lack of community visibility, external and internal bi phobia are just some of the crucial reasons people choose not to disclose.

"I think it's really an excuse," professes Louise Brown of Los Angeles. "I think bisexual men are really gay, just not strong enough to admit it." Louise's boyfriend admitted he was bisexual in true grandiose style: he blurted it out in the middle of a crowded room and quickly dashed off. Consumed with devastation and guilt, Louise spent the next few years reconciling her feelings for her ex-boyfriend and what he had done. The two maintained a friendship for the next few years until she recognized an inequity in their relationship. "One day I had to say, 'Wait, I'm straight. This is your life. These are your issues.'" Louise's experience changed how she approached future prospects. "I became acutely aware of the gay persona from spending so much time with my ex-boyfriend that I could create "gay friendly" conversation. Depending on how a guy who showed interest responded, I'd draw my conclusions." She adds, "It wasn't a test. I'd just assume he was gay."

In a perfect world being open about one's sexuality without repercussion would seem the norm. Empathy and acceptance in lieu of ridicule and isolation sounds inviting, but such a utopia has yet to exist. The issues of honesty and trust can find themselves in second position when self-preservation is at stake. Adds Malik, "I think its [coming out] a person's choice, not necessarily a social responsibility. Yeah, your partner has a right to know---to an extent. First, though, you gotta be ready to tell them. Really ready."

But what subliminal messages, if any, are people feeding themselves by not being open? "Why should we feel shame about ourselves," offers Dr. Ronni Sanlo, Director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center at UCLA, "when in fact our sexuality is as much a gift from God as any other part of who we are."

Not everyone is in the dark, however, about their partner's sexual proclivities. Andy met his partner of three years, Will, in a bathhouse in North Hollywood, California and the two immediately became an item. Will was the first relationship Andy had in which he felt any emotional attachment. Will's bisexuality didn't completely arrest Andy's feeling's for him. "I tried to cope with the fact that he also dated women," says Andy of his growing intolerance

of his lover's outside relationships. "At one point I became very manipulative," he says. "I would call up the women he had dates with and cancel; say he was sick or just couldn't make it. I wasn't exactly the victim."

If Andy saw Will as the love of his life, why was he willing to share him with someone else? Also, would it had made a difference if Will's escapades were with men? "Absolutely, claims Andy. "I wouldn't have put up with it. I know how to compete with men. We're on the same level, but competing with a woman is something different."

Does Andy's acquiescence represent a larger social order? Are same gender loving men socialized to accept second billing in these kinds of situations? "It really depends upon an individual's own outlook," professes Siri Sat Nam, a registered MFCC Intern. "Some, who aren't clear about their identity, may view it as not truly being worthy of love in a monogamous way. Someone else may view it as believing they're involved with a real man. Many still believe if you are intimate with a woman you're behaving like a real man." Historically, homosexuality has been viewed as immoral, illegal, and unnatural. In fact, until recent years homosexual feelings were perceived as a psychological disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. Adds Sat Nam, "It's hard to develop a positive self-image with such a historical reference."

The bisexual community, as a separate, independently viable entity, is still, by and large, pressured by both the straight and gay communities to choose a side. Defining complicated emotions and assigning a context to them in a manner conducive to all concerned parties can be a daunting undertaking. In a world in which the pressure to assimilate runs on high voltage, the likely solution seems to be to define the rules for one's self. Bisexuality, and the types of relationships spawned from it, will continue to remain enigmatic until the individual at the core---the bisexual---establishes his or her own ground rules. Picking and choosing the policies and edicts that define the experience and establishing an ethic of conscience will

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Brother 2 Brother and the AIDS Prevention Team are programs of the National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum and are funded in part by the County of Los Angeles Office of AIDS Programs and Policy, corporate and private donors and your generous support.

DANCING QUEEN?

by
Jean Pierre Campbell

Chicago, Illinois---Some years ago I attended a wonderful party given by a notorious queen who must know every black gay male in town (the party was teaming with homosexuals). And like the consummate host, he knew exactly what to serve a bunch of sissies---strippers, of course. I remember one of the strippers had the body of life: Herculean shoulders and arms, massive thighs, and dark caramel skin. He was the embodiment of sexual fantasy for a number of us present, judging by the way we initially ogled him.

As he gyrated (and sashayed) about the room, ineffectively workin' the crowd for tips that were not forthcoming, I was reminded of the lyrics of my favorite RuPaul song ("Now prance! Prance, Girl! Now prance! Prance I said!") Unfortunately, there was something so effeminate about the stripper's movement, a daintiness which seemed too ladylike for one so manly-looking.

As a large part of the room roared with laughter (undoubtedly many were laughing for the same reason I was), a good "girlfriend" of mine commented, "Now that don't make no sense, all that good man going to waste."

Though I said nothing, my inner voice was reading the stripper for points, too, because he ruined our fantasy, because he came up short on the invisible manhood scale in our minds. Sadly, I was too busy silently reading him to ponder the rest of the song, which could've been the stripper's response to us all ("Why you throwin' that shade? I just wanna get paid.")

But recently I had the pleasure of meeting the man with the flawless body at a street fair. This time I noticed he had a great smile, and I found his conversation absorbing. In fact, I took his critique of local sissies to heart.

"You know, the kids in California love me," he said, commenting on his west coast popularity as a performer. "And in New York, too. But here at home, brothers are not feelin' me, and I work so hard at being a professional."

Though he was glistening, bare chested in the sun in a menacingly tight pair of athletic shorts, as we talked I began to pay less attention to his crotch...because of something much bigger. He went on to say that he'd performed on stage with non-talented dancers who obviously lacked serious commitment to their bodies, yet they made more money than he did in tips. He admitted the only thing they had going for them was a masculine charisma they exuded.

What he described sounded so like us, I thought, especially in the anal-retentive Midwest. If you look at gay dating ads, for instance, it's quite clear what gay men don't want: "No Fats, No Fems." And if I hear one more tired sissy comment with loathing, "Oh, he looks like a man, but she ain't!" I'ma leave faggots alone and start datin' women!

Because I felt so bad for the brother, I decided to be honest about what my friends and I initially thought of his performance, thinking he could use constructive criticism.

"When sissies look at you, you're giving them this Last Man effect," I began cautiously. "And since sex among sissies is no more imaginative than among straight folks, we often use the same tired sex roles. So while pumping up your body is all well and good, you got to butch up your act a little bit, too, if you wanna get over."

I knew it all sounded ridiculous, and so did he. I mean, if as gay men we refuse to allow straight people to use stereotypic, masculine images to define us, why would we adopt those very same images and use them against each other? Further, it's silly enough that homophobic butch queens are sexually repulsed by effeminate men, but how can the sissiest sissy be repulsed, too?

Though my new friend graciously listened, I suddenly realized that I wasn't telling him anything new. After all, what could I possibly tell him about what men want that he didn't already know, as a stripper? Besides, it was obvious that he was comfortable being who he was and had no intention of adding "performance" to his performance. And when I really thought about it, why should he?

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Change Requires Courage: The AIDS Prevention Team Becomes New Village Project/APT

by Terrance Evans

The AIDS Prevention Team, designed to address issues culturally specific to the African American experience in the age of AIDS, has undergone many changes since it's inception in 1991. An L.A.-based program of the Washington D.C.-based National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum, APT, under the direction of Program Director Christopher Smith, is expanding it's programs and it's vision. Having recently relocated it's headquarters to a larger facility at 1247 South LaBrea, APT has officially changed it's name to New Village Project/APT to emphasize the belief within the African Diaspora that it takes a village to raise a child.

"We want to create something that speaks more to our social and political realities," Smith said, "Change requires Courage. I was raised with the philosophy that when something is wrong, you don't just complain about it, you fix it."

Shortly after losing a friend to the epidemic, Smith became involved in the AIDS struggle. "I said to myself, 'How could anyone so beautiful, so vibrant, be taken away like this?' I had to do something. So I went and volunteered." That was ten years ago when he became a community health outreach worker for the Inland AIDS Project in Riverside, California. For the last three years, he has been more active in the Oakland Bay Area and Los Angeles County. "There is still a disproportionate impact of HIV on Black men who love men. Eighteen years into the epidemic, we're still at the back of the line, at the bottom of the ladder."

Indeed. 40% of all AIDS cases in 1996 in the U.S. were African Americans. This comes at a time when AIDS deaths have dropped among whites.

"What we've been doing has not been working," Smith said, acknowledging that the African American community has been slow to respond to the epidemic and has often responded with hate, judgment and/or casual indifference. Christopher recalls hearing countless times 'Oh honey, we don't have money for that' while he fought to implement new models of service based on social realities that confront gay and bisexual men of African decent.

Currently New Village/APT's budget is approximately half a million dollars a year, which is minuscule considering the work that has to be done. Most of this money comes from government grants and contracts, but financial support through private donations from within the community are much needed. Writing grant proposals is a complex process that often involves hiring a professional grant writer. Christopher says that APT has not had that luxury.

There has been a deplorable lack of resources and leadership within the community to uplift and nurture who we are. Along with these challenges, alleged spirituality has been used against us repeatedly, and for some, it reduces self worth and a will to live. Survivors of the AIDS epidemic sweeping throughout the African American community have lost far too many beautiful spirits due to denial, hopelessness and disenchantment with organized religion.

But the void is now being filled. At a time when many black lesbians and gays are trying to hold on to their connection to God and redefine spirituality for themselves in the new millennium, it's good to know that there is a place for us. Christopher Smith, himself an ordained minister, is among a new breed of community leaders who maintain that the dogma of traditional organized religion may be doing more harm than good in the wake of the epidemic.

"They use scripture to promote Homo-hatred," he states, referring to the conservative religious zealots who have had a history of deeming AIDS as God's punishment for our sins. A case in point is the commonly referenced Leviticus 18:22: Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is an abomination. Smith believes that this law, among many others mentioned in the Bible, have little relevance to modern day culture. "That law was for a people that needed to procreate."

Currently the world is suffering from overpopulation, we certainly have no shortage of mouths to feed. These same bible-thumpers don't talk about the last time they ate pork or shrimp, whether they ever used birth control, lied or lusted. All these things are forbidden according to scripture. Yet some families have used the Bible to distance themselves from loved ones who love the same sex, especially once they are afflicted with the virus. Christopher feels that, "Our black men and their families and the community are still

in such denial."

Fortunately, the black church in the United States is slowly coming to the reality that greater attention must be paid to the AIDS epidemic as it continues to impact our communities. Black religious leaders recently joined on World AIDS day to help launch the 10th anniversary of the Black Church Week of Prayer, this time for the Healing of AIDS (March 7-13, 1999).

"We talk about safer sex and we talk about treatment. The epidemic has been reduced to condoms and pills, but people have lives. Some people are living from paycheck to paycheck, other people are praying for one. We would like to weave a community quilt where someone can find a thread that they can use," continued Smith. The New Village/APT can assist you in making choices about your treatment options if you are living with HIV by providing the latest information on traditional and complementary therapies. But ultimately, it is better to stay well than to get well. The new and continuing programs will strive to address the full spectrum of the black gay and bisexual man's experience.

The Programs: Below is a summary of current and upcoming activities and events of the New Village Project/APT. If you have any questions or need clarification of any information found here, please do not hesitate to call (323) 964-7820 and speak to the contact person for the event or program listed.

9th Annual Brother 2 Brother Retreat - Men's Community Project of New Village/APT designed to present educational and social opportunities for Black men who love men, and "build our community through breaking down walls and building bridges." The three-day excursion in the Malibu Hills is planned for October 1-3 and the theme will be "Living in The Spirit". Preregistration and a nominal fee are required. Contact Brandon Felder.

Touch The Man - Six-week men's intimacy workshop series exploring relevant emotional issues involving family relations, individual perception, sexual identity, moral values, personal development and more. Contact Bruce Eddins or Christopher Smith

First Fridays - Evening social hour for the community to get in touch with ourselves and network with each other. Next scheduled for May 7th from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Contact Bruce Eddins

Soul Food Sunday - You can host a potluck style dinner for 10 of your closest friends AND make money at the same time. Contact Bruce Eddins or Ivan Daniel III.

Community Forum Series - Monthly panel discussions featuring several community members and HIV/AIDS political activists. Most recently held April 8th, 6:45 - 9:30 pm at the Watts Labor Action Committee on Central Avenue in Los Angeles.

Positively Alive - Drop-in support group for HIV positive black gay men to discuss issues pertinent to their lives and experiences. Tuesday's from 7:30 to 9 pm at the New Village Project/APT. Contact Bruce Eddins

Body and Soul - Health and wellness series focusing on relaxation, exercise and diet for HIV positive black gay men. Thursday's from 9 pm at New Village Project/APT. Preregistration required. Contact Francis Greene.

Basic Black - Drop-in discussion group for black gay men and others in the community. Held Tuesday's from 7:45 to 9:45 pm at the Lucy Florence Coffeehouse, 6541 Santa Monica Boulevard. Contact Chaz Lanier.

Along with these programs there have been two issues of HABARI GANI, which means What's New or What's Happening in Swahili. This is the organization's newsletter designed to disseminate information of use to people living with HIV and to update the community on events sponsored by New Village/APT.

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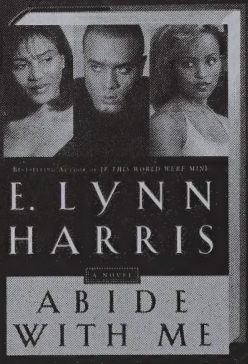

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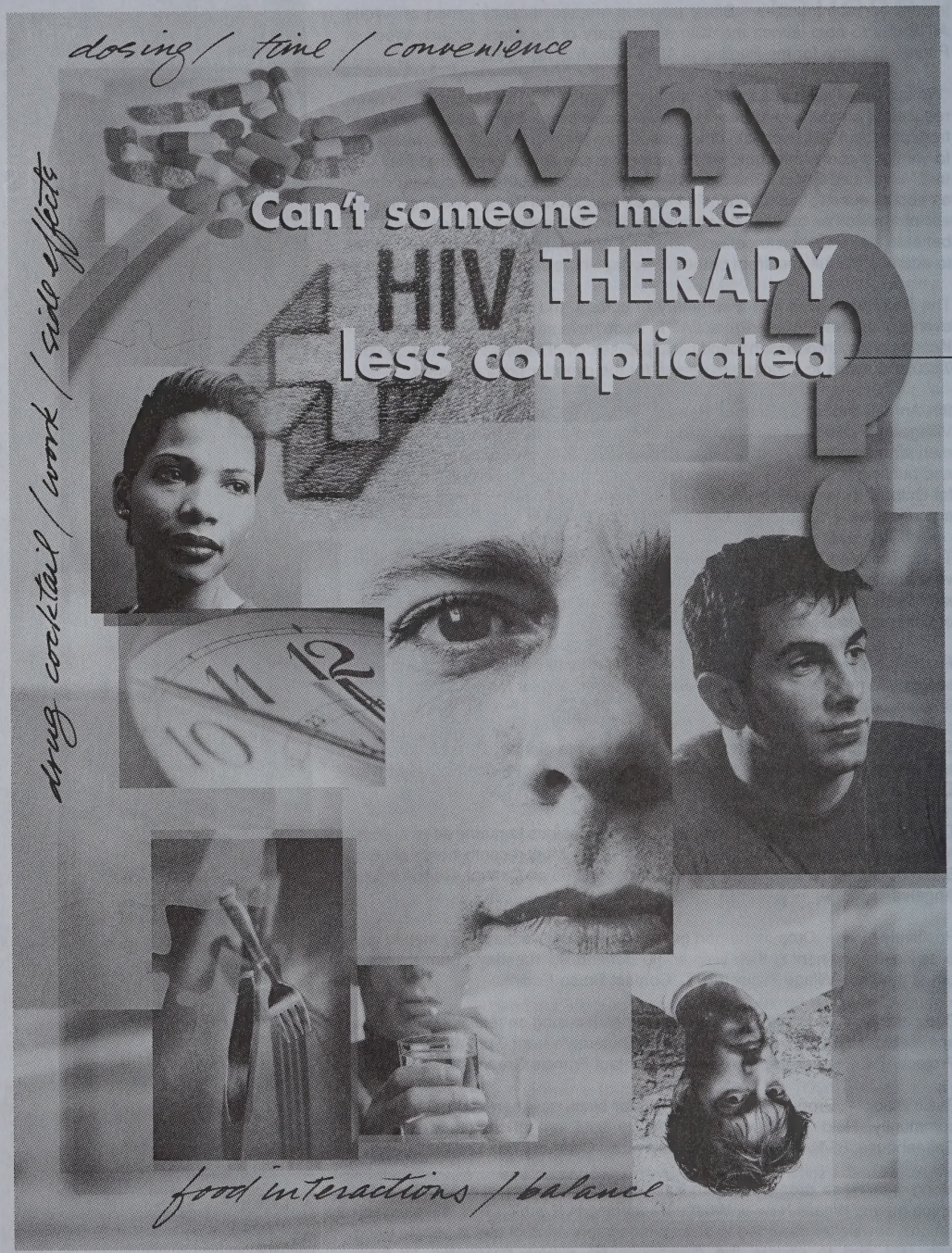
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SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

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*NNRTI - non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor.

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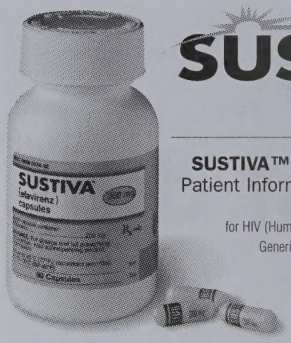

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(sus-TEE-vah)

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Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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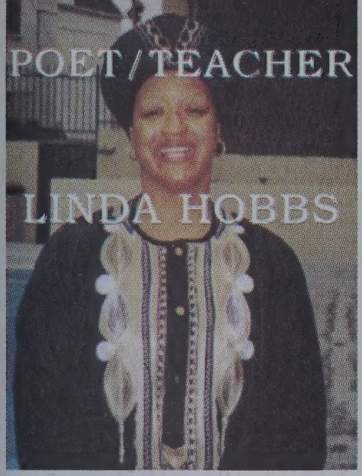

CREATING SPACE FOR LESBIAN AND GAY WRITERS OF COLOR

story and photo by Jennifer Glover

"My primary purpose in writing was not to write. The purpose was to find that special place to heal my pain, my soul. I never sit down to just write a poem. I write my fear, anger, isolation, shame, and my joy. I write my joy of being African American, a female, lesbian, a mother, daughter, incest survivor."

Blessed with enduring energy, commitment and an extraordinary creative ability, poet/performance artist and renaissance woman Linda Hobbs is now sharing the joy borne from pain. She is the teacher and creator of Words To Heal Your Soul, a writers' workshop for lesbian and gay men of color.

"Understanding that, my direction was to heal my personal suffering," she goes on to explain. "I attended two writing classes at the [Los Angeles] Gay & Lesbian Center. One was for sexually abused women of all colors. The other was a co-gender class for gays and lesbians of all colors. Both classes were excellent. However, I still felt, as an African American lesbian, uncomfortable sharing my racial issues in a racially mixed environment. My white therapist, one of my best friends and one of the strongest advocates of my writing, told me I need the love and support of gays and lesbians of color. That way, I could find healing for my issues."

As a published poet whose work has been receiving positive attention since first appearing in print back in 1993, Linda attended NLA, an African American Lesbian Conference. "While attending the conference, I was able to get in touch with how much damage sexism, racism, and homophobia was doing to my current life. I asked my therapist, how can I heal from this? It was excruciatingly painful. Psychically, racism, sexism and homophobia were glass that I was eating every single day! It was destroying me! In pain, I asked my therapist to help me find a support group with other lesbians of color. Instead, she suggested I develop a creative writing course myself! And so I did.

"I used my most painful issues to acquire my themes. The Warrior In You; Honoring Our Ancestors; Mastering Our Worst Enemy, Fear; Secrets and Shame; Free To Be Me; My Beautiful Body of Color; Lesbian Fantasies/Loving Women. I then looked over my childhood [and then] applied eight to ten questions on what happened , or what I wished to happen."

Initially, Linda performed gay pieces for all gay audiences, black pieces for black audiences, incest and feminist work in front of feminist audiences. She was then advised to "perform all of my work in front of everybody!" Through her public readings, Linda soon discovered the impact her writing was having. "Lesbians would hear my work and cry," she recalls. "Gays and lesbians of color would hear my work and give me such positive response."

Her work would prove to have the same effect on general audience as well. " My most memorable experience was being told about a straight white male who was in court-ordered therapy for continually beating his wife. There was no progress with this man until he read one of my poems! He broke down and cried for the first time. His healing began that day!"

Realizing gays and lesbians of color wanted her work, and knowing affording a private course (running about $300 for eight weeks) would be difficult for some, Linda contacted the Los Angeles City Cultural Affairs Department. The Cultural Affairs Department wanted to service an under served population such as people of color, gays and lesbians, those struggling with alcoholism and those who are HIV positive. The only glitch was that the city did not provide funding until completion of the project.

But this was not to stop Linda. She found and secured a location and met various city requirements, publications and promotions. After acquiring the site, she did all the cleaning and the decorating. She spent three months researching the grant and it took a year to complete the writing course by using her own money. All this she achieved while maintaining a full time job as an elementary school teacher.

One of the eight-week classes was taught at the Alcoholism Center for Women. The other course was conducted at the Catch One Disco, the popular L.A. night spot and community center run by noted entrepreneur and community activist Jewel Thais-Williams.

"We wrote on racism, sexism, and homophobia as it directly affects us," she stated, explaining the focus of the course, "but more importantly, this was an opportunity to transform pain, fear, and isolation into harmonious artistic form. Watching it happen was miraculous! I believe there is a writer in every gay and lesbian of color, trying to get out! My greatest joy was watching my students grow in just eight weeks. Some had never written before!"

Linda is proud to say that she has gotten as much out of these classes as any of her students. She experienced personal growth and healing often, particularly when two students came out to their parents. The healing continued as she witnessed the class of total strangers bond and share, and further, when the audience responded to the work and were moved to tears and laughter, while still demanding more.

So what does the future hold for Linda? She's adding several new classes this year: Words To Heal Your Soul; Warrior Women of Color. Warriors Conquering: All Homosexuals of Color, Lesbian Survivors of Sexual Abuse. Women Coming Out; and a class that Linda is extremely excited about: Sisterhood. It's focus will be on each woman establishing and reaching her financial, physical, spiritual, and educational goals.

"I had the most supportive, bright, loving students that any teacher could ever ask for. I am eternally grateful for my students who honored me with eight weeks of their lives..."

As a child---and today---Linda embraces poet Langston Hughes In one way or another. Their lives have many parallels. Her last name was Hughes. He was easy to find in the library. And Linda Hobbs, a not-so-different Hughes, is also easy to find---conducting classes at the Alcoholism Center for Women, at Jewel's Catch One Disco, doing readings at Unity Fellowship Church, The African Market Place, performing at Kwanzaa Celebrations and gathering those who want to shout the words that heal and and brings forth harmony. Linda knows that we must document our histories. We must value, preserve and appreciate our writing for future generations. If not, how will they know we were here?

[If you are interested in Linda Hobbs writing classes, please sign up for her mailing list. Send your name, address, zip code, phone number and e-mail address to: Words To Heal Your Soul/ P.O. Box 36539/ Los Angeles CA 910036-0539]

LAST NIGHT I CRIED
by Terrance Evans

Last night I cried
Because Hate seems so much easier to some than
Love
I cried because so many of my people only see
Faggots and Dikes
Not Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters,
Aunts and Uncles, Friends and Lovers
I cried because so many have died before they
learned to enjoy Life and Love
And some have found Justice and a perverse kind of
Joy in their passing
I cried for mothers who denied their Love to their
children until they lost them
to Disease and Hopelessness...until it was too late
I cried because Hell so often manifests here on
Earth in the hearts and minds
of those who allow their Pain to condemn others for their
concept of Heaven
For young men and women who's hearts have Burst
open wide under the pressure, and chose
to end their lives
For those who lie to themselves and hide their
hearts and souls from those who Love them,
yet Know them not for who they really are
Then I wiped my eyes and realized that my living
is not in vain and that the sun also
rises as it falls
That those who are gone from this place live on in
my memory and remain in my soul
And their Lives and Love shall not be forgotten
Next time I cry, they will be tears of Joy in the
knowledge that we are all God's children
And we are perfect in our imperfection

Peace and Love

photo by David Leroy (c) courtesy of The David Aden Gallery

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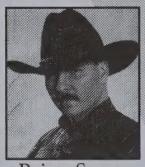
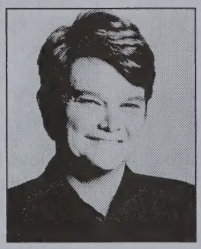


Brian Scott

Thelma Houston



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ouT iN HoLLYWooD PaRT II:

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by Jabali Hicks

World class and acknowledged as one of the most expressive vocalist in the business, Arnold McCuller is doing his shit in an industry that reduces the images of black performers into two slim categories: Hard Ass Gangster Rappers & Light-as-a-feather Pretty-Boys.

An Ohio native same gender loving brotha, Arnold McCuller is the product of his own imagination. He Honed his skills as a back-up singer for the likes of Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Luther Vandross, Bonnie Raitt, Linda Rondstadt, Bette Midler, Phil Collins, Brenda Russell, Lionel Ritchie, Beck and Michael McDonald. Arnold's concert tours also include Lyle Lovett, where he was both opening act and featured vocalist, and Phil Collins 1990, '94 and '97 World tours.

Alongside his work with the other artists, Arnold recorded his first solo project 'A Part Of Me That's You' in 1984 which is enjoying re-release success in Japan. His second effort, "Exception to The Rule", was released with significant radio success and introduced Arnold as a songwriter as well as a vocalist. I got together with Arnold at his Hollywood Hills home to circumnavigate his jet-set playground lifestyle and discuss his latest project "You Can't Go Back" on his own label What's Good Records.

JABALI: Your home is like a 50's vintage museum..where do you get your inspiration from?

ARNOLD: My first boyfriend was an interior decorator, so I just got really lucky. He picked out the color for the walls and he really kept it in sync with the era of the house which was built in 1956.

What was the inspiration for you to start your own label?

I had been recording a lot of music and looking for a deal and basically everybody loved my music, but they didn't know what to do with it. I was in a situation with major labels where I was told point blank that my record would not be promoted because it was not 'black' enough. These days everybody wants to be the new Clive Davis (Arista Head who 'discovered' Whitney). Record company executives want to be the one to say they've made this person happen, they made their career. And the fact is that people make their own careers by doing their own A&R, and going into the studio to record their work. Babyface was writing and recording for years and years before he was 'discovered' by the masses. It's not like he is an overnight success. I think the problem with record companies today is that most folks are just trying to hold onto their jobs by doing what was done yesterday. The other thing is that radio plays a lot of hip-hop and dance music. There are a lot of black artists out there who just don't do that. There are black artists who play and write folk music, jazz and old R&B. Everybody doesn't just want to hear hip-hop. There's nothing wrong with what's played on the radio, but there is more out there. So (hip-hop's) the flavor of the year, that's great. Still you have to satisfy the listening ear of those who want something else. This is why I started my label as a vehicle to voice my creative energy.

How do you plan to get your music out to your audience, with all the fierce competition from the majors?

Everybody I know who is making records is putting them out on the Internet. And they've done nothing but encourage me to do the same. I've become acquainted with the whole Internet business so I can sell my stuff. I'm readjusting my knowledge of the computer so I know the intricacies of downloading singles and such. I mean, the big record companies are becoming dinosaurs 'cause they're not jumping on this. They fought it rather than embraced it. Just like CD's & Mini Disc's, you have to be competitive with the industry and technology. What's happening is the small labels are being eaten alive by major players like Seagrams (PolyGram, MCA) who say they want nothing but hits, so what happens is whatever is not top 40 programmable is no longer desirable.

I find that whenever there is an industry shakeup, the creative fallout is very intense and liberating. What is your intense liberation?

My website www.arnoldmcculler.com is intensely liberating because I am doing the thing I feel I'm meant to do. This outlet affords me the opportunity to perform my material in environments that offer a personal feeling. I think it's important for other entertainers to know that they don't have to rely on the majors to be successful. All they need to know is the business basics. Instead of relying on a manager to secure your deal, do it yourself. It's a scary process of putting your name out there, get it going with a DBA and a barcode. The only thing holding me back right now is distribution. But I overcome that by walking my record into Virgin Megastore. I work the gay bookstores like A Different Light. There's always room for liberation.

aCToR/DiReCToR/SCReeNWRiTeR
YuLe CaiSe

On a cold and quiet Friday evening last December, a festival of short films was held at the Catch One discotheque in Los Angeles. One of the dance club's walls was outfitted with a cinema-sized film screen, and that evening, tables and chairs covered part of the dance area.

There doesn't seem to have been much publicity for the festival. Although the event was free, there were fewer than twenty people in attendance, most of whom staggered in well after the showing began. The owner of the club, the ever stalwart Jewel Thais-Williams was there and had a warm greeting for everyone. While her presence alone brought a certain warmth to the chilly dance-hall-turned-movie-theater, it could do nothing to take away the melancholy atmosphere one sensed at there being such a sparse crowd for such a rare event. There are so few films, whether long or short features, that tell our stories and/or are made by us for us. It was a disappointment that there was virtually nobody there.

Except for one short that treated the subject of AIDS in a purely dramatic fashion, most of the films dealt with their respective subject material in a light, accessible manner. In so doing, they give in each instance a fresh perspective and rendered that material in a way that was enjoyable and instructive. Unlike the case of most full-length commercial films or even independent films, these shorts portrayed characters---same gender loving, *multidimensional African American* and *Latino* characters---in intriguing ways. At the end of a couple of the shorts, I felt cheated precisely because what I was seeing was such a rarity that I simply wanted more. For instance, the club scene in Stephen Winter's "Here Be Dragons" featuring the bitchy repartee of two friends "jone-ing" on each other's love life was cut short virtually before it began. It is a truism that when short films are the most successful and conceptually fulfilling they merely tease.

The limits of short films are their strength. Film shorts are like poetry: they are about economy and have a very deliberate purpose. They use metaphor as long films use plot, saying something specific, getting off the dime and moving on. They are perfect for young filmmakers without much money who want to learn their craft, although for all of their facility, short films should not be considered merely long films in miniature. The short films at "the Catch" were accomplished, showed an uncanny ability to express a theme, and much to their credit, constitute just about the only film legacy there is to date dedicated to telling *our* stories. In little time they say a lot. There is enough said in Cheryl Dunye's "Greetings from Africa" short about interracial dating to say no more. There is enough said in Michael Mayson's "Billy Turner's Secret" about being in the closet to never want to go back to that subject.

The longest of the short features shown at the Catch One Film Festival (dare one call it that?) was Yule Caise's "Boy's Night Out." It was unquestionably the most polished and appealing of the shorts.

It is the story of Carver (played by filmmaker Caise), a well-educated young man, African American, who is unemployed, and living with his like-wise African American girlfriend. She is obviously much more successful, career wise, than he and somewhere near the beginning of the film she walks out on him, all the time implying he is a loser. On the heels of his girlfriend's departure, Carver catches up with an old friend and classmate, Winston (Maurice Lee), a young man who is also African American with whom Carver competed in track in prep school. It turns out that Winston wants Carver to compete with him in another foot race, the winner of which stands to gain a good deal of money. It also turns out that Winston is one of the children, living with a white drag queen ("Stand By Me" teen star and "Star Trek"'s Wesley Crusher Wil Wheaton); Winston also has AIDS. The race is in fact an AIDS charity run. Carver's eventual participation in the race in place of his friend (who can't run because of a sprained ankle) awakens his (Carver's) consciousness about his place in the world and the value he should choose to give it.

Yule Caise was the only one of the filmmakers whose work was shown at the Catch One Film Festival who was actually in attendance. He is a jaunty sort of guy quite like the character he portrayed in "Boy's Night Out." He lives a stone's throw from the area of Los Angeles that has been called Black Bohemia (Leimert Park), and he works out of a studio in that other Bohemian spot, Venice, California. In the last few years, Caise has been at work more as a film writer than as a director or actor. He worked for a year with Sidney Poitier producing the script for the film "Free of Eden" that premiered on Showtime in February. Lately he has been busy getting financing for a feature he will produce and direct titled "Freon." The film is set to begin production this Spring and is billed as a "sexistential" comedy. It will star Kadeem Hardison.

I had a chance to speak with Yule Caise on his return from the Sundance Film Festival. We talked about his evolution from a child actor---he was a regular on the PBS series "Up and Coming"---to movie director and screen writer, and he spoke candidly about subjects ranging from homophobia in Hollywood's black film community to the uses of multiculturalism in film.

Aubrey McCoy: What impulse led you to make "Boy's Night Out"?

Yule Caise: First and foremost, I guess what really made me make the film was that I had lost my eldest brother to AIDS. I wanted to do something in his honor. We really didn't grow up together because he was my father's first child, but his death affected me. Because of his death, I remember trying to figure out why people in the African American community don't talk about certain things, certain diseases and particularly AIDS. If somebody is sick, it's treated like a shameful something. I hadn't spoken to my father in a number of years and when we did speak I asked him how Carlos was, and he didn't even tell me that Carlos was sick. Then when I spoke to my sister a few months later, she told me that Carlos had passed away. But my own father didn't tell me, and I felt like he must have known that his son was sick. And I thought, 'Why is it that we

as a community don't talk and communicate?' That kind of silence is shameful. So I wanted to do something about it in my own small way.

In the film you deal with some serious subjects with a lot of whimsy, a lot of humor. Why did you choose this approach?

That was in some ways a bold step, if you will, but I wanted to make a film that would get people talking. I also wanted to deal with the question of why there is so much homophobia in the black community, and I wanted to do it in a way in which, if the film were shown, it would spark this kind of discussion. I also hoped that the film would be shown to people who wouldn't normally even want to see a picture that deals with AIDS or homophobia---people who wouldn't have seen themselves as wanting to explore that subject matter. I especially wanted them to see it. I think that sometimes the best way to broaden an audience's perspective is through humor. I could have made a totally, entirely different film in which my audience would have been much more right on with it from the get go. But I was really trying to reach out and deal with those two issues, homophobia and AIDS awareness, in a different way. The film is not just for people who are effected, affected or are sympathetic and suffering. It's also for people who would otherwise be indifferent or hostile. I've shown the film to various audiences, some that you would not think would appreciate the film. I show it to incarcerated youth, for example, and the idea of showing it to them is one that many would think taboo. People think they would not want to see it. Well, of course, some people walk out, but, by and large, ninety percent of the kids stay and we can discuss it afterwards. We talk about, for instance, what if you were Carver and it was your friend who you found out was gay and sick? If this was your friend, how would you react? I keep going back to it, but really the whole idea of the film was to stimulate dialogue among ourselves because I think that we as a people just don't talk enough.

Did you ever fear that "Boy's Night Out" would typecast you in the industry?

Did I fear that? I certainly asked myself that question numerous times. But I'm comfortable both with myself and my sexuality, so, I guess while there was some fear, I knew that I had my own reasons for making the film and that is what was important. It's the film that I wanted to make for better or for worse. I knew I would catch some flak for "Boy's Night Out" within the black filmmaking community, where I actually know most of the players. I know that sounds a little odd, but I think there is an extremely high rate of homophobia within the black filmmaking community. And that has always kind of disgusted me. I picked it up before making "Boy's Night Out." I mean, if you are not an identifiably "black, gay filmmaker" then you're invisible on movie sets, and people take the liberty of showing their prejudice. I was always just sickened by the amount of homophobia that goes on. It's like some sort of macho badge of honor some of the bullshit that's said. I had people who were upset that there were black and white people together in the film.

Why did you have the Winston character in "Boy's Night Out" partnered with someone white, the drag queen character Marco?

I had always though of doing "Boy's Night Out" really as a kind of multicultural fairy tale. I toyed with all different races and stuff, and ultimately Wil [Wheaton} was just a fine actor and a friend. If I had set this particular film in Oakland [instead of San Francisco], I would have been aiming for the same thing. What is conspicuously missing in the thing is that I wanted it to speak to as many communities of color as possible, including Asian Pacific Islanders and Latin Americans and Native Americans. I mean, when I set out to make the film I didn't set out to make it to be soley an African American project because I was trying for a broader audience than that. But I always want all of my core characters to be African Americans. One of the things I'm trying to break beyond is only setting up these movie worlds where the characters are either just all black or they're just all white when really in fact we live in a world where there is everybody.

There are several things going on in your film. Your black characters are relatively or even greatly privileged. But for all their privilege, or at least all the privileges they have enjoyed, they seem to have hit hard times. Initially one would think the theme of the film was how hard it is for a well-educated young black man to find a job in corporate America. Carver's employment possibilities are going nowhere. I mean, the entire scene in the men's club underscores that. Carver has lunch at a posh men's club with some old buddies. two white, and a black one indistinguishable from the white ones. Their lunches are a regular event and it is Carver's turn to pick up the check. He pulls out a credit card, but later a waiter tells him the card is rejected. So, it seems that you are not just addressing the subject of AIDS, which is the central subject of the film. You seem to also be dealing with the glass ceiling for African Americans in corporate America.

Very much so. I mean, I played the lead character in the film and those are issues that I deal with myself. And I always thought it was so very strange if you've gone to a good school, and gotten a good education then nothing happens. I went to Harvard, but that didn't open up doors to me like to some of my white counterparts. There's a disconnect between the privileges of an Ivy League education and what the real world affords you. I grew up with no money, but I went to Harvard and that whole world made me feel like Cinderella. It's an extremely privileged environment to experience even though during the whole time you might be otherwise broke, or struggling to survive. Not everyone is psychologically up for the contradiction at that stage or afterwards. I've seen it destroy a lot of brothers actually. So, yes, I am toying with a lot of those adaptations and adjustment issues in the film. I had to deal with that because I was questioning some things about myself. How it was that I had done all the right things, gone to the right schools, and all that, and I was still with nothing while all my other white friends were generally making a lot of loot, you know, and enjoying the American Dream as it were.

Back in 1993 you wrote the screenplay for the movie "Way Past Cool," based on Jess Mowry's book. Then, you were an associate producer of the actual film made in 1997, producing it along with Norman Lear and Milos Forman. It's about a group of young people trying to reclaim their childhood. What drew you to the story and kept you there?

Well, the novel takes place in Oakland, which is essentially home, and I had always wanted to turn the book into a movie after I read it. I just thought it was a wonderful story, one that touched me. In my mind "Way Past Cool" was to be an urban version of "400 Blows" by Francois Truffaut.

It's not the first time that you've dealt with the theme of the struggles of children and young adults. In 1987 you wrote, directed and edited a short film for PBS called "Shoes." It was about three black teenagers coming of age in the Roxbury section of Boston.
Yes.

I have to ask, were there difficulties in your own adolescence that make you especially sensitive to the problems young people face?

I've never asked myself that question, but I guess so because I've always been drawn to youth. I'm really fascinated and interested in that moment in young people's lives where there's like a line---a line that you are either going to cross or not cross and it's going to determine so much of your fate and your direction. It will determine which way you are going to go, be it in a positive or negative direction. It's like a precipice, and once you make the choice, you're on a path and it's hard to get off that path.

You mean like what Shakespeare says about the tides in a man's life? If you take the right tide, you'll go in the right direction?

Right. And particularly I think that line or tide is much more generally apparent within the African American community and communities of color than elsewhere. I mean, it's especially important in the African American community, and certainly for me personally. Whereas I have some black friends who have gone to Ivy League schools, I still have a lot of other friends who have been in and out of jail, pimping, hustling, doing whatever. But when we were coming up we were all together. So what were those events that changed our lives? What are the events that change lives? It's those events that I've always been interested in.

You wrote the screenplay for the film "Free of Eden" which starred Sidney Poitier and his daughter and aired on Showtime back in February. How do you write a role for an institution like Sidney Poitier?

I asked myself that same question. You know, when my agent called me and said 'Sidney Poitier wants to meet you,' I was sure I had done something wrong. I was thinking maybe I had said something about him, I don't know. But writing "Free of Eden"---whatever my doubts or misgivings---gave me the pleasure of working with Sidney Poitier, and it was a pleasure. It was an experience that I will never, ever forget. And the experience was made all the richer because I didn't think I was going to actually do the project. They'd ask me if I wanted to do it, and at the time I had been offered another job directing a movie which will remain nameless.

You must not have done it?

Well, it got made with somebody who is now quite famous. But, I was hired and I guess through some sort of creative differences or something, I was un-hired. So when I told Sidney what I though of the project and the ideas of how I would do it, I was blatantly, brutally honest, because I didn't think I was going to be doing the job. I said for me, the most interesting thing would be the process---which is always the most interesting thing for me, the artistic process, and the exchange between artists. I told Sidney that I would be interested in working with him and exploring that exchange, including our possible differences. And so when it came time to actually do the gig, when I had come back groveling to say 'Uh, I know I said I couldn't do that, but I can right now,' the ground rules were already set. And he said, 'Well, you want to do it? You and I will have to spend a lot of time together, and that's how we'll do it.' So, I spent about a year with Sidney, spending time with him on an almost daily basis here and in New York and San Francisco. It was hard work, but we also had a great time. I got to be myself with him. Like I took him to dinner in the Castro on Halloween, and things like that.

That should have been an experience.

Working with him made me understand that he is truly a gentleman. It actually made me want to raise the level of play. When you work with a legend, you would expect that your best qualities (whatever they are) come out, and you want to rise to the occasion. But that doesn't necessarily have to be the case. Luckily, it was the case for me working with Sidney. It was a little scary actually, especially those moments when I was thinking, 'Well, I've got to come up with words that Sidney Poitier is going to say,' you know? That's when you pick your words well.

How does Hollywood normally treat you?

It's extremely hard to make headway---especially if you have your own vision. I've always really wanted to do the kinds of things that I have wanted to do. I've really tried not to compromise a lot on that, and because of that, I would say that I have suffered greatly financially.

You were talking earlier about homophobia specifically in the black filmmaking community. I've noticed that black movies have been stereotyping same gender loving people, almost always relegating them to stereotypical roles such as hairdressers. "Waiting To Exhale," "Soul Food" and "Poetic Justice," are cases in point. These guys in some cases aren't even named. They're stock figures that are brought on for comic relief.

It's our own type of stereotyping, and I think it's repeating some of the same things that are done to us as a people. We end up just doing it to a different segment of ourselves. I never really find [these characters] true and I never find them funny, and I always find it old before it even starts.

Regarding your recent trip to Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival in Utah. The big splash from that festival according to news reports was a film by the Hughes Brothers titled "Pimps". Isn't this just more of the stock portrayal of blacks in movies?

I did not see the film but I'm anxious to see it. It was so sold out you couldn't see the film. And I have to say that it's a subject matter in which I personally would be curios. There was a lot of debate up there about showing the film. You know, it was the old question, 'Why show this side of ourselves?' And I haven't asked myself that question because I haven't seen the film. I might see it and be like, 'Why show this?' But I try not to shy away from any particular subject matter. I think that sometimes when people say 'Why show this?' it's too much self-censoring. I would say that the conservative side of the black community does more self-censoring than ever goes on in the white community.

But the black community has more to lose than the white community.

LESBIAN & MOTHERING IN HETEROSEXUAL AMERICA

by Jennifer Glover

photo by Ron Singleton

Sometimes I sit back and watch the world in motion. Everywhere, there is some type of spotlight on homosexuality. It seems the country is in an uproar! There is always something new for *them* to protest about. For some of us, our struggle is infinite due to just being black or being a woman. But what about those of us who are lesbians of African American decent? What about those of us who are African American lesbians who happen to be parents? Where do we actually fit in heterosexual America?

Being and living as who we are in this society is difficult. First, we are black in a nation where being such places us in a dim light. Then being a woman is no easy task. We have to fight to obtain, to maintain, to retain. We constantly battle to prove our worth, our knowledge, courage or even our strength. Often our gender determines how much we are paid! Also our rights as women reflect how the country views us as human beings. In my opinion, it is our right to do what we wish with our bodies, our minds, and spirit. However, being a lesbian parent adds to the fire of living, evolving and existing.

Being a lesbian and a mother takes us as individuals to a higher level, a different frame of mind. We exude a certain brilliance as no other group.

First of all, society, our families and everyone in the midst is against the choices we make. Societal views, political arguments, the media, even the religious right place negative spins on who they think we are! *They* judge us according to what they feel is proper. Because of this we continually fight for our rights. The right to have a job, to marry, to plan a family.

In their words the traditional family includes a male and a female. We are seen and treated as sacrilegious, unethical, illogical, and against nature's grain. But what they fail to realizer is, we have suffered so much as a people, naturally we instill the highest morals, values, and decency in our children. We teach them to not judge others because of their skin, culture, creed, disability, religion, or their sexual orientation! But of course when and if we have a child, it's usually perceived that we will mold it into being a gay child!

Those on the exterior looking in on our "non-traditional family" should stop and look at what they have taught our children! Momma is a deviant in an unnatural relationship, she is destroying the fabric of family values, etc.! My question is how is that conducive, positive or functional? Everything on the exterior is what poisons young minds, not what happens in the home.

Often those closest to us, meaning our family, feel we have made a horrible choice by "choosing" to be lesbian. So of course they take it upon themselves to right our supposed wrongs. I've seen families take women to court, then battle for years to obtain custody. I've seen families lie, cheat, and conspire to remove a child from a loving home. It would be different if, in these instances, there was dysfunction, child abuse, or neglect. But who gives people the right to decide who and which type of person is fit to be a parent? Once I saw a family and their church take a child away from a lesbian couple, just for the child to end up in an abusive foster home. This is confusing to me, I don't understand. What does being in a same gender-loving relationship have to do with raising, providing for, and loving our children?

My goal is to raise and love a family with my spouse, just like anyone else! I want a child, someone to love, to teach and guide in the path of goodness, embracing all humanity. Someone to carry on my legacy, benefit from my achievements, who resembles me or has my traits! I want to instill my values and knowledge. However, I have fears. The war on gays has begun! In their opinion, we have too many rights, too much exposure, too much power!

I fear bringing a child into a world that sees only race. Race as a form of non prowess, education or non education, non human attributes. I fear bringing a child into a world where he will be seen initially by his skin's hue, the texture of his hair. I fear bringing another human into existence where he may have to bear the "sins" of the lesbian mother. He may be teased, threatened, embarrassed, accosted, even hated. Who's to say, he may have to defend me, my ideals, feelings and lifestyle.

I said all of this to say, the odds are against us at every turn. They always have been. They want us to fail, be miserable, search for happiness but not obtain it. So to all of the lesbian parents and lesbians planning a family, keep the faith. Motivation, desire, belief and hope are all we need.

May your Divine Creator protect and keep you. Happy Mothers Day!

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ONE ON ONE WITH E. LYNN HARRIS

an interview by Stanley Bennett Clay

E. Lynn Harris has done what few writers have done before. Through 5 best-selling novels---Invisible Life, Just As I Am, And This too Shall Pass, If This World Were Mine, and the current winner, Abide With Me, Harris has gathered to his pages a coalition of devoted heterosexual and homosexual male and female fans seeking answers, or at least some enlightenment, to the questions of sexuality in the black community.

A writer of deceptive simplicity and consummate taste, Harris has created a world of well-educated, well-traveled and well-heeled African American, body-by-fischer male and female beauties whose devotion to family and friends is only matched by the 'casual' complexity of their sexual nature.

I had just completed reading Abide With Me prior to our scheduled interview. This final chapter of the three part saga which began with Invisible Life picks up smoothly from part two Just As I Am. All the familiar characters are back. The handsome and intellectual lawyer Raymond Tyler, Jr. is now in a long term dream relationship with architect Trent, a fraternity brother from his college days with whom we became acquainted in the final pages of Just As I Am. They are now settled comfortably in Seattle. The familiar and talented Nicole, now married to Raymond's best friend Jared, is performing in a revival of Dreamgirls, her lifelong fantasy at last coming true. Nicole is thrilled to return to the stage, but when things start to go wrong, her young and beautiful understudy, Yancy Harrington Braxton, steps into the spotlight a little too smoothly. And Nicole, far from achieving her dream, is suddenly forced to reevaluate her life and her marriage. Raymond's distinguished parents are back too, relishing in their son's burgeoning political stardom. Also back, by popular demand, is resident asshole Basil Henderson, still as fucked-up as ever, with his fine, confused and irresistible ass.

In Abide With Me Harris spins a simple tale of faith, integrity, friendship, love and forgiveness with wit and compassion. The laughs are warm, the come-up-ants are finger snapping, the relationships are touching and tear jerking, and the writing is fast-paced yet comfy. I like these people a lot, these creations from the heart of a good-hearted soul.

E. Lynn could easily be a character out of one of his books. In fact, he's several characters out of his collection. Even as we speak on this surprisingly overcast Wednesday in his well-appointed suite in one of Beverly Hills' most exclusive hotels, he looks to Friday when he'll fly home to Chicago where, for the past year, he purchased adjoining condos, gutted them and, along with his longtime companion, Rodrick Smith, redesigned the two units into one sure-to-be spectacular showplace. Yet fame and fortune, along with the attended accoutrement, have not spoiled the ever gentlemanly, down-to-earth and humble Arkansas native. Sitting down and talking with E. Lynn Harris is like sitting down and talking to an old trusted friends. What follows are bits and pieces of that exchange:

STANLEY BENNETT CLAY: So this is book number five for you. You've now been famous for a sec there, my brother. Have you gotten used to it yet?

E. LYNN HARRIS: Nah. I don't think you ever get used to it. It is strange though; reactions that I get. Actually, the love that I get, it's amazing. I did A Different Light [bookstore] in San Francisco the other night and I got back to my hotel suite and I was just overcome with emotion because it was a big crowd and the guys were so wonderful. They brought me flowers, they brought me gifts. They were so excited to meet me. And for awhile I didn't understand it, I didn't understand the nervousness, the excitement to meet me. But then I had a chance to meet Toni Morrison and it was happening for me. I was sweating and excited. And so I kind of got it; what people are trying to convey. It's just best wishes, great 'thank you's'. It's a blessing. It's a tremendous blessing and it's still very exciting to me.

There's a school of black novelist that seems to be very popular now---Terry MacMillan, your books---where finally we're seeing middle class black folks just living regular old everyday life---

---with regular old everyday problems. I think that's a good thing. Terry did us all a tremendous favor when she came out with---not necessarily "Waiting To Exhale"---I think with "Disappearing Acts". That's really when I discovered her and that's when I really decided I wanted to write, because it was a story I could relate to, with characters that I knew, so yeah, I think it's great. It's a wonderful time. I was at Esowon [bookstore in Inglewood, California] last night and we were talking about that. This period that we're in is not a renaissance at all. This is something that's going to last forever because a renaissance implies that at some point it's going to be over. I think that the interesting thing about this boom in literature as opposed to what happened during the [Harlem] Renaissance is that we're not dependent upon whites to support our works. It's blacks, both middle class and not so middle class, who love and buy these books. Last night at the store there were so many people there buying both books, "Invisible Life", which is now in hard back, and "Abide With Me", and these people are repeat buyers because they want them for their libraries. It's such a great thing. Black people are beginning to collect books. I've started collecting African-American fiction. I buy everybody's book, first editions, what have you. It's a real exciting time.

Do you think this new slant in African American literature is related to The Cosby Show's popularization of middle class black life?

That's an idea. Cosby brought it to the forefront where more people became aware of the invisible black middle class. I think all of us have known it was there. Even though I didn't grow up middle class when I was coming up in Little Rock, I was very much aware that there was a black middle class. I just wasn't a part of it. We had many black people in Little Rock who were doing quite well, but it was almost like a secret. Nobody knew but those who came in contact with it.

"I recently had dinner with some friends and one of the young men there said, 'you know, I read your book years ago. I was literally reading it in the closet' and he said 'I was so mad at you.' And I said 'why is that?' He said, 'It seems to me that you were giving away all our secrets.'"

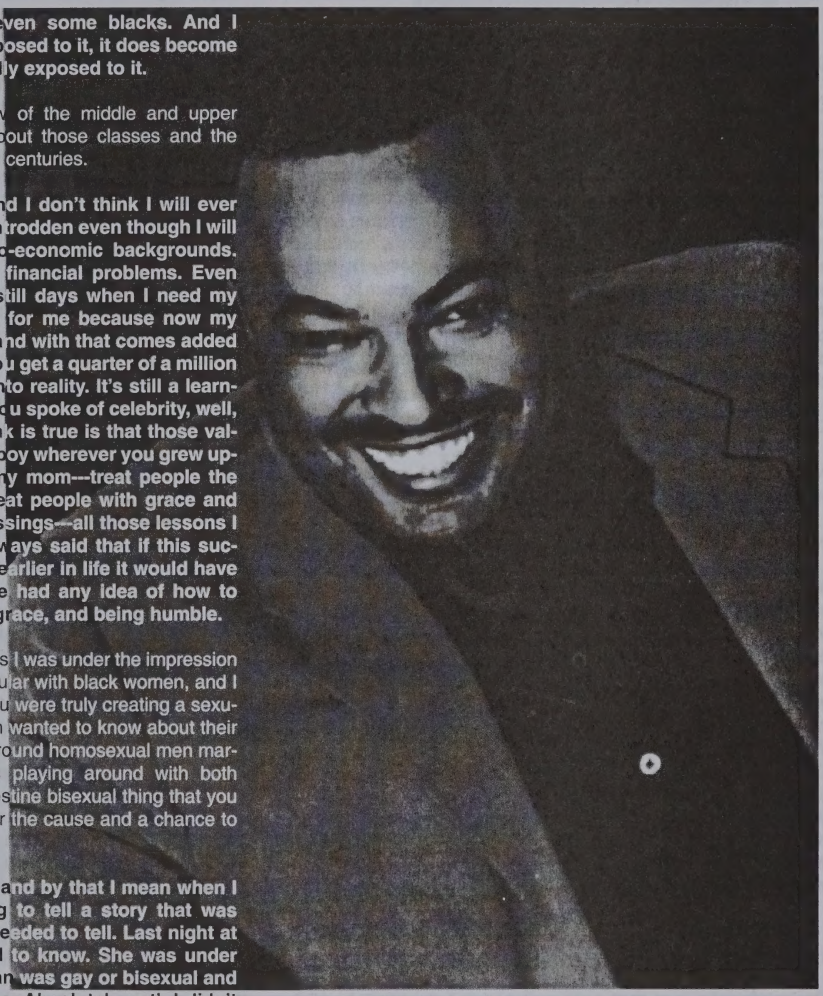
Whites seemed surprised. And even some blacks. And I guess if you grow up not really exposed to it, it does become something new when you are finally exposed to it.

Obviously audiences enjoy the view of the middle and upper classes. Shakespeare only wrote about those classes and the audiences have been eating it up for centuries.

Most definitely, most definitely. And I don't think I will ever write a story totally about the downtrodden even though I will have characters of different socio-economic backgrounds. But even the middle class suffer financial problems. Even though I've done well, there are still days when I need my agent to get a check in the bank for me because now my whole milieu of living is different, and with that comes added headaches. I mean, the first time you get a quarter of a million dollar tax bill it shoots you back into reality. It's still a learning process. Even with success. You spoke of celebrity, well, it's still a process, but, what I think is true is that those values that you were taught as a little boy wherever you grew up---in my case in Little Rock with my mom---treat people the way you want to be treated, to treat people with grace and dignity, to be thankful for your blessings---all those lessons I learned then help me now. I've always said that if this success would have happened to me earlier in life it would have been disastrous. I would not have had any idea of how to handle success with wisdom and grace, and being humble.

When I first started reading your books I was under the impression that your books were particularly popular with black women, and I surmised that the reason why was you were truly creating a sexual bridge in the fact that black women wanted to know about their men, and there was so many underground homosexual men marrying heterosexual women, brothas playing around with both brothas and sistas, that whole clandestine bisexual thing that you explore gave black women pause for the cause and a chance to check things out.

If I did do that, I did it unwittingly, and by that I mean when I wrote "Invisible Life" I was trying to tell a story that was placed in my heart, a story that I needed to tell. Last night at Esowon this black woman wanted to know. She was under the impression that every black man was gay or bisexual and I just told her, 'Well, sweetheart, no. Absolutely not'. I didn't write [Invisible Life] to create any kind of paranoia. To be quite honest, Stan, it wasn't about trying to do anything deep. It was to tell a story, a coming of age story of this character somewhat like myself. That's all that it was. And if it created a bridge, if it got the African American community to talk, then that was a bonus, but looking back there was no grand scheme. I recently had dinner with some friends and one of the young men there, and this was my first time meeting him, said, 'you know, I read your book years ago. I was literally reading it in the closet' and he said 'I was so mad at you.' And I said 'why is that?' He said, 'It seems to me that you were giving away all our secrets.' And I said to him, 'I didn't give away



"It's work, I mean, not so much being in love, but being in a relationship and having a thriving career."

anybody's secrets but my own. I didn't list names. I was telling my story.' And he understood afterwards. It wasn't a plan to out black gay and bisexual men. It was just a desire, at a low point in my life, to do something with my life. And that was to write. Now, this is what people expect me to write about. I don't know if that's going to always be true. I hope that they'll let me grow. I'm telling them now that this ["Abide With Me"] is the last of the trilogy. I'm not writing about these characters anymore.

I understand you're working on your memoir. How deep are you going to go?

Oh...it's such a...I don't know. I'm 3/4's finished. I'm tempted to go back and change and take things out, part of it is because I am a celebrity, in a literary sense, and partly because I want it to be uplifting more than 'woe is me'---'oh, how sad it is that I'm black and gay, blah, blah, blah, so on and so forth'. I don't want that kind of story. I always say that the memoir is for anyone who has ever suffered a lack of self-esteem, for anyone who has ever known loneliness and for anyone who has every looked for love in all the wrong places. And the ties that bind us. And the humanness of all of us---black, white, gay, straight, bisexual, Puerto Rican, whatever; the humanness that brings us together more so than the things that separate us.

Do you have a title for you memoir?

No. I started with "For Colored Boys..." but I decided I didn't want to do that. When I finish the title will come to me.

How easy is it for you to write?

Most days it's very easy. But the only problem now, if there is a problem, is the business of being E.Lynn. It's like a full time job. Part of it is being E. Lynn Harris and part of it is---not building a house---but I bought two condos and had them gutted out, so it was like building a house because everything was gutted and started brand new. And, believe it or not, we move on Friday [note: this interview is taking place on Wednesday]. So I need to go home Friday. I have signings in Chicago this weekend. So, literally, all morning I've been talking to the designer and my partner, making sure this is being delivered, and my mom is coming up, and it's just been a huge task. But thankfully my partner has done most of the work. He's been there with the designer from day one while I was still traveling.

I know you're a very private man. Do you mind talking at all about your partner?

Except for the fact that he's wonderful. I decided, he didn't ask me, but I decided not to talk about him because he didn't decide to be a public person, but he's a wonderful African American man. It has not been without it's ups and downs, but it has been one of the best relationships I've ever had. It's a very good thing. It's the stabilizing force in my life. You can easily get carried away with all this and I have to sometimes think how difficult it must be sometimes to be the partner of E. Lynn Harris. He just told me a story this morning of how some girl who has been flirting with him for almost a year said to him, 'Oh, I saw that dedication in E. Lynn's book.' This time I put his name in, but that was only with his permission, because before I would use a code name, but this time he said 'use my real name.'

So being in love is better than not being in love.

Oh yes. But it's work, I mean, not so much being in love, but being in a relationship and having a thriving career. I'm gone a lot. And it is kind of like what people say. Even though he's very, very handsome, the people come and are excited to meet me. And not that they ignore him, but it's difficult. People don't have any shame. They go for what they want. He was just with me in San Francisco. And last night, here in L.A., some woman came up to me and asked me, 'Where's Roderick?' I said, 'Oh, he's at home." And she said, 'Oh, getting the house ready, huh?' But then I remembered the last time he had come to L.A. with me and the women who would come up to me, they know, they pick up things. He always talks to them and takes pictures with them...

What is your writing process? Do you have a system?

I tell young writers 'you need to write every day." But for me it is a a quiet process of letting the characters come in and tell me what they want to do. I keep a journal whenever I get ready to start a new book and I go back to the journal whenever I run into slow parts. And what I'm doing this time that has really turned out to be quite wonderful is having people who want to sign my journal so that when I run into those days when it's not hitting me I realize that one of the reasons why I write is because so many people will enjoy it.

In your future, do you see yourself venturing into darker material?

You know, I know it's out there. I know there's a very dark side to the world that we're a part of---that's a good question, Stanley---but sometimes, with my anger at the way we as black gay men treat each other, I thought that if I wrote a book about that, would it get us to talk about it, but the reason I haven't gone there is because I think I want to uplift us by telling positive stories. I mean, I could put a lot of stuff in [my books] that would shock people, and I went through a part of my life of being a black gay man, and it wasn't so much of being ashamed of being black or gay as much as being angry at the community as a whole, especially when I wasn't dating and couldn't meet anyone and everyone seemed to be another bad seed or another bad apple, all the cattiness, it bothered me. It really bothered me. I just don't know if I'm willing to go there yet. That would be kind of like telling secrets. You can give a little of it to characters, but I take great care with my gay men characters and my women characters because these are basically people who are my family. My best friend is a heterosexual black male and I don't feel the need to promote the kind of person he is because he is my friend. But with women, especially African American women, not only because they buy my books, but the closest people to me are African American women. And now, being in a stable relationship, it's not about promoting what's going on with me, it's about giving people hope. A young man came up to me and asked me to write in his book 'He may not have been your Trent, but maybe the third time is the charm'. And I didn't ask him to explain it, but what I got from him was he had probably come out of an unsuccessful relationship, but he was still hopeful. If I wrote a book about somebody doggin' and doing all kinds of things, then those people out there who still

believe in love, who still hope for love, it could take away their hope. If you can't find it in fiction, then where can you find it? I really do think it does give some people hope. Some people want to find their Trent, their Raymond, even their Basil. People just want to feel optimistic about the possibility that they can have love in their lives.

Now you say you're killing off these characters in the 'Invisible Life'-'Just As I Am'-Abide With Me' trilogy.

Yeah, they're gone.

Including Basil?

Not including him. I'm going to do one more novel about him alone because he's complex. He's one of my creations that I have learned to respect as a writer. I felt about him like a lot of people felt about him. This jerk. I needed a bad boy. But with each novel I've learned a little bit more about him.

How far are we away from that book.

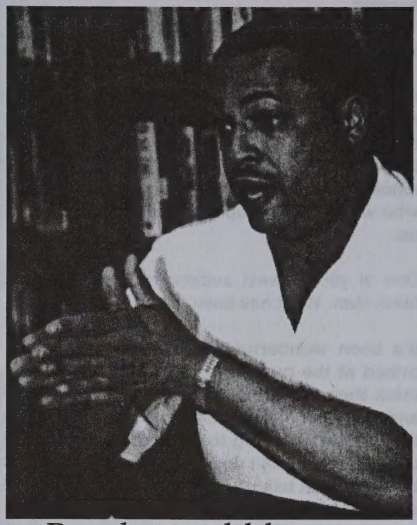
A year. Usually I make you wait 18 months, 2 years. I know it seems like I write a lot of books, but all of my books have been 18 months at least.

Which of your books is your favorite?

I don't have a favorite. It's like saying which of my children is my favorite. Each one has been a labor of love. And this one ["Abide With Me"] was difficult to write in a sense that I wanted to make sure it was a good story, and also I had so much going on in my life. Sometimes I would have to leave home to write. I'd go to New York, and that's difficult on a relationship. So I was trying to get back home and trying to do my job and trying to be supportive of what Roderick was doing with the house, even though, believe it or not, I don't think it was his forte' and I don't think it's my forte' putting a house together. I'm not the kind of person to sit around and pick out designs. Our designer loves that kind of stuff, that's why you hire someone. I knew I wanted wood floors. That's about it. It was driving me crazy with the extent of the details when you're building a home. I wanted to buy one of the models. So I was worried about this book. I really was. But it came out. I think one of the things I don't like about my success is the pressure that is self-exerted to do as good as you did last time. Last time my book ["If This World Were Mine"] made the New York Times Bestseller list after 5 days, but last time I had national media. I had "CBS This Morning", I had Tom Joyner, and this time it wasn't happening and I was terrified that people wouldn't know the book was out there. And finally Rodrick left me a message one day because I was suppose to be interviewed by Tom Joyner the first week, but they were being profiled on "60 Minutes" so there weren't having a lot of guests that week. So I got bumped for Debbie Allen, and I was really kind of disappointed. But Roderick called me and left me the sweetest message---we're at home everyday but he left it on my cell---'don't worry, your book's gonna be just fine. You're gonna be just fine'. So I kind of released it, then low and behold, after 5 days we were on the list. The book had even done better than the previous one. Somehow black people, which is not my only audience, found out the book was out without advertisement, without radio announcements. It was that word of mouth and people just going into stores. So I could 'exhale' if you will. And then I decided that the main thing was that people were reading the book and enjoying the book. It doesn't matter if it's number one or number 101.

It's interesting. A heterosexual colleague of mine, a brother who is very comfortable with who he is, had engaged me in conversation regarding the homosexual characters in your books. He considers himself a big fan of yours. What is your personal take on non-homosexual response to your books. First off, black heterosexual women?

They love it, even though it causes them---I wouldn't say fear---a little bit of concern. They love the stories. People are always asking, 'why do you think black women are so into your stories?' and I think it's because they're very open



People would be surprised at the number of straight men who read my books. I think they read them because their women are so into them. Then they're surprised that it's not what they thought it was going to be. I think their biggest fear is if they can imagine what I was writing about, even if it's only for that time---I'm not talking about having sexual fantasies, but I'm describing something on the page and they can go along with it, can visualize it, I think that causes a little uneasiness. But then they realize that their sexual desires haven't changed after they've closed the last page.

minded.

What is the reaction from black same gender-loving men?

Usually, 90-95% positive. They love seeing their stories on the page, even though it's not all of our story. I don't, for one, pretend to think that this is every black gay man's story. A lot of us still suffer with the issues I talked about---low self-esteem, loneliness. A lot of us don't feel comfortable enough to share who we are with people who we say we love and who say love us.

One of your newest audiences, like my colleague, the straight black man. What has been his reaction?

It's been wonderful and surprising. People would be surprised at the number of straight men who read my books. I think they read them because their women are so into them, and then they're surprised to realize that it's not what they thought it was going to be. I think their biggest fear is, if they can imagine what I was writing about, even if it's only for that time---I'm not talking about going and having sexual fantasies about it, but I'm describing something on the page and they can go along with it, can visualize it, I think that causes a little uneasiness. But then they realize that they haven't changed, that their sexual desires haven't changed after they've closed the last page. And that's one of the most rewarding things that happened during the last tours. So many straight men came up to me: 'Hey, man, you alright', and like you said, these are not straight men pretending to be straight. The ones pretending don't come up.

What's been the reaction from your new white readers?

They're becoming very loyal too. They write, they send pictures. I got a letter from a 67 year old white man from West Virginia who had just finished reading "Invisible Life". In Richmond, Virginia. I had this white lady---a 51 year old school principal---who paid an enormous amount of money to sit next to me at this dinner party for authors, and this woman knew more about my characters than I did. She could recite lines verbatim.

I know that a couple of your books have been optioned for film. What are your feelings about one day seeing your characters up on the big screen?

I'm sure it will be a wonderful experience. I have seen my characters on stage. Florida A & M did a stage version of "Invisible Life" and the kids did a great job. And it was great seeing it on stage at a black university. Now that version is getting ready to go off-Broadway.

Do you have any wish-list actors for your characters?

I really don't. I mean, I love a lot of women actors---I love Sheryl Lee Ralph, I love Halle Berry, I absolutely adore Vanessa Williams and Angela Bassett and Regina King---any of those women---

What about men?

Not really, and I'm being absolutely honest with you, Stan. I do have one person that I would want to play Basil but he may be too tall, and that's Rick Fox who plays for the Lakers. I had a chance to meet him. He's dating Vanessa Williams now.

I remember when we talked in Dallas when "And This Too Shall Pass" had just come out back in '96, you mentioned that you'd love to see Della Reese play MommaCee---

Still do.

That's my favorite of your books. Has it been optioned yet?

Not yet. We've had several offers, but giving up your books is like giving up your children, and I haven't felt as strongly about giving that one up, and I will take my time. With "And This Too Shall Pass" a lot of [film] people wanted to change the ending. They didn't want to see Zurich as gay, and I didn't say that he was gay in the book, but they wanted me to be more clear about that. But I'm holding on to that one.

Do you have a desire to express yourself artistically in another discipline?

The only other aspiration that I have in that sense is to write the book to a Broadway musical. And interestingly enough, during my last signing in New York all the Broadway divas came. And there was a guy there who was in "Smokey Joe's Cafe" who'd written all the music for a new musical, and he asked me from the audience---he's a big fan---would I be interested in writing the book. So we exchanged numbers. My passion is sports and the musical theatre. Last year I got to know Brian Stokes Mitchell [star of "Ragtime"] really well. I went to his last performance on Broadway and he and his wife have been so wonderful to me.

So what are you reading these days?

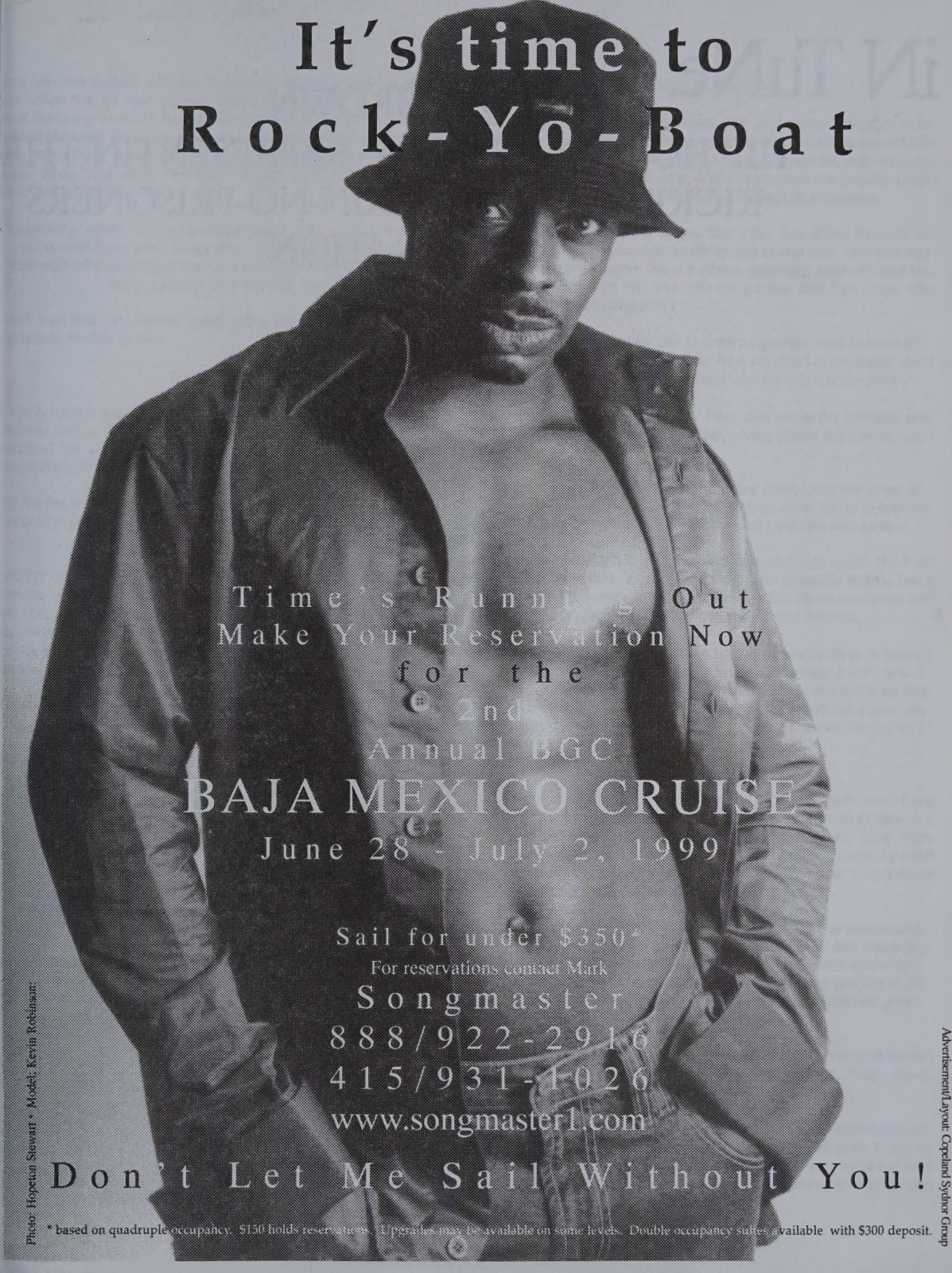
I recently read and enjoyed "Waiting In Vain by Colin Channer; "Infants Of The Spring" [originally published in 1932] by Wallace Thurman; "Stigmata" by Phyllis Alesia Perry; "Our Kind Of People" by Otis Graham; and "Getting To The Good Part" by Lolita Files. I've also read advance copies of "The Harris Men" by Rodney Johnson and April Sinclair's "I Left My Back Door Open".

Tell me about the E. Lynn Harris Better Days Foundation.

It's a non-profit foundation I formed for writers so that they can do workshops and can be offered mentoring programs. We're also going to do a writing contest and give out grants and hopefully use my name to get people to agents and publishers and industry contacts. And this summer I'm going to bring writers into the community so young people can meet them and get to know them and say, 'Hey, this is something that I can do!' I'm very excited about this. I know that, had I seen writers when I was young, writing would have been something I would have pursued a lot sooner than the second half of my life.

Finally, what would you like to say to SBC readers?

I'm very, very thankful and grateful for their support. And it means as much to me today as it did when I was selling books out of the back of my car. They were the first ones to support me. Black women may be the largest group, but black gay men have been the most dedicated. I will never turn my back on them, or not include a black gay character in my novels.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FOXY BROWN: HIP HOP CINDERELLA REPRESENTIN THE KICKIN-ASS-AND-TAKIN-NO-PRISONERS GENERATION

by Tory
photo by Michael Lavine

first became familiar with the Mahogany Mommy with the slanted yes when the 14 year old new Jill stole the show on LL Cool J's emix featuring some of the hardest brothas in the game, including Method Man and DMX. A couple of years later, a 16 year old with the ode name Foxy Brown did the same thing on Jay Z's hit "Ain't No Nigga" from "The Nutty Professor" sound track in the summer of 996, delivering lines like:

'especially/ when I'm sipping billies/ don't give a damn/ how you move/ with them other mommies/ I push the z/ eating shrimp scampi/ with rocks larger than life/ not them reebok broads/ you made it known who the wife was./'

t was then that kids started going crazy, and even the hardest hip-op heads started to turn.

Poetic Justice

n 1997, having secured a record deal with Def Jam, Inga Merchand eleased one of the most anticipated albums of the year. She even redicted her own multiplatinum success on the song "I'll Na-Na", vith Method Man, which is also the title of the debut solo effort:

'Yo Na-Na so I'll/ first week out/ shipped half-a-mil/ Niggas freaked out/ She got the I'llest pussy on the planet/ Sugar walls coming down/ Niggas can't stand it./ The I'll Na-Na/'

got the opportunity to meet Foxy when she requested my make-up ervices while promoting "The Firm", her 1998 collaboration with Nas, AZ, and Nature. Even alongside the likes of AZ, Nature, and Nas, who have been compared to hip-hop legends like Rakim, Foxy hined, spitting out some of the album's hottest tracks and hardest hymes, like on the underground club Jam "Fuck Somebody Else":

'Reverse roles/ Niggas is my hoes/ cop my dough/ Wanna lace me with some head/ after my show./'

The press had pegged Foxy an X-rated, shallow, sex symbol, just as hey had pegged Madonna, overlooking the fact that she has repeat-dly achieved multi-platinum success throughout the last two decades. They reported cases of Foxy attacking people, they turned heir noses up at her provocative style, and accused her of being the product of a Svengali-like ghost writer Jay-Z. Rumors and media nade her out to be a villain and a bad role model for a young America.

met a different girl; a young lady who reminded me of my 12 year old mahogany brown sister---sweet, polite, and easy to get along with. But what I admired most about Foxy is that she is a young black entrepreneur and a millionaire. She is an independent black woman, like the ones who raised me. And she's a very little girl with a very big presence. Her beauty is overwhelming and she has the eyes of a fox.

Foxy represents us kids from the often forgotten urban neighborhoods who are growing up with a new sense of self worth and a "get money" attitude, who have traded in our gang signs and crack pipes for pen and paper. We have traded up to real and true self- expression. We now apply our street hustling skills to industries where we take over in positions once held by rich, college educated white men. We vote in large numbers and riot when overlooked. We desire the finer things in life like expensive champagne, Cartier, and couture. We don't just read Vogue. We are Vogue!

MIXED BLESSINGS

Being young and finding success can sometimes become overwhelming. Friends start to change, oftentimes becoming opportunistic groupies or jealous competitors. Managers, agents, and business associates become pimps, liars, and thieves. And the general public puts you on a pedestal only to chop you down at the knees.

On her sophomore effort, Chyna Doll Foxy has come through the bullshit with barely a scratch on her cocoa brown skin. She addresses all of her playa haters like a poetess, speaking sincerely and eloquently---like Lil' Kim, her one-time rap partner and best friend who is now her biggest competition:

'You were my Sista/ we use to dream together/ how love could make it real/ do our thing together/ Now we don't even speak/ went our separate ways/ separate lives/ lost friendships/ for pride./'

On the autobiographical "My Life" Foxy addresses the jealousy and, what she calls, the black girl's ordeal, where ghetto princesses grow up fatherless.

'Became demented then/ men resented them/ Just the scent of 'em/ made me hurl/ Especially them balling ones/ trying to buy me them pearls/ All I needed was love/ all I wanted was Love./'

Her honesty makes her a role model. Her ability to speak the truth and at the same time explore and flaunt her sexuality makes her a pioneer in the women's movement. But it is this same openness and honesty that is often snubbed by other so-called feminist.

'Yall don't wanna take my place/ catching cases/ spitting in faces/ I never seem falsely accused/ by some playas rules/ but if I was a dude/ they all be amused/ But I'm a woman/ so I'm a bitch/ as simple as that/ double standards/ call him a mack/ call me a hoe/ say I'm in it for the dough/ you feel me/ then what the fuck he in it fo'?/'

Super Role Model

By now you are probably disgusted by the fact that I have called Foxy Brown a role model. Well get over it. She is. I am proud to send my 12 year old sister autographed pictures and music from Foxy because she speaks to her and discourages her from choosing a full time career as the baby's mother. She is the voice and breaks down barriers for chocolate covered girls all over the world.

'So he played you right?/ Shot a little game/ then he blazed you right?/ talkin bout he was gonna make you his wife/ and make you right/ then the last thing you saw/ was his car break lights/ he fooled you girl/ Pussy is power!/ Let me school you girl/ Don't get up off it till he moves you girl/ and let no playin nigga ruin your world/ and screw you girl./'

Chyna Doll contains 17 hard hitting tracks including the club smash "Hot Spot". There are guest appearances from Mya, Total, Jay-Z, Mia-X, Gangsta Boo, and DMX.

With hip-hop now being popular on mainstream MTV dominated airways, Foxy may very well be the next Madonna. But even if not, as long as sex sells and God continues to bless her as one of the best MC's with some of the best tits in the business, then job security isn't a worry for this fast ascending superstar.

HaPPY eNDiNG

romantic fiction by

Sergio Wadell Willis

photos by Ron Singleton

Gavin Webber and James met each other roughly two years ago through a mutual friend. It was the most unusual of circumstances that brought these two unique individuals together. It was also an unusual thing that two men with such drastically different backgrounds could become the best of friends. Close enough to be brothers, actually. Pablo was the acting force responsible for bringing these two young men together. It all started with an ad put in the personals by Gavin. Pablo---who at that point in time didn't know Gavin, and hadn't heard of or met him---answered his ad. After a couple of conversations, Gavin realized that Pablo was an ex of his ex. Basically, Gavin and Pablo decided not to date. It seemed too close to home, plus the two men figured there wasn't any chemistry between them. However, Pablo knew someone else looking for a date. That person was James. Pablo introduced the guys. Physically, Gavin and James saw each other as attractive.

Gavin was caramel brown. Almost light but not quite. Thin and very boyish appearing (at the time he'd shaved off the moustache along with the goatee). Gavin had his hair cut very low. The most distinguishing features about Gavin were his lips and eyes which friends said made him favor the model Tyson. Of course, he never had a problem finding a date. Gavin just found most guys to be...well...boring.

James was about two hundred pounds of solid muscle, and a little taller than average. With his bald head and dark complexion, James was used to intimidating people. The most distinguishing thing about James was his thick bushy eyebrows, which connected above the nose.

Although both men thought each other to be handsome, James considered Gavin talkative as well as immature. Meanwhile, Gavin felt James was a cocky jock lacking any friends---always so cool and laid back, always scoping out his next conquest. Despite all this, both young men would talk on the phone for hours about the one thing they had in common; collecting comic books. This was the foundation of trier bonding. For James, this was the first gay friend he'd never been to bed with. To Gavin, James was like a long-lost brother. One day that would change.

It was the spring of 1998 and Gavin was finishing up the last two weeks of film classes over at LACC. This had been the most difficult semester. There seemed to be a test every other day. Gavin felt exhausted, but he knew he had to hang tough because that degree remained yet years away. This certain Thursday, James surprised Gavin by picking him up at the bus stop after school. Gavin's car had broken down days earlier and would be in the shop until Saturday. He could barely believe his eyes when James pulled up in his red Acura.

"Happy birthday, champ!" Gavin said with a laugh, walking over to the car.

James grinned. "Need a ride?"

Gavin opened the passenger door and got in. He looked at his friend.

"What's going on with you? You look like something's eating you, J

James shook his head and drove off. "Just tired, son. Been workin hard, that's all. You hungry?"

Gavin unzipped his jacket and smiled. "You know the answer to tha question."

James snorted a half-laugh as he turned at a light. "Yeah, your ass is always hungry."

"Well, what can I say? Since it's your birthday, let's go somewhere classy!"

"Classy to you has golden arches out front."

Gavin playfully punched James on the arm for his comment.

"Nah, silly---I'm talking about Beverly Hills...let's find a nice expensive restaurant that serves good seafood...my treat."

"Alright, son---those are famous last words."

Eventually, the two men decided on a place on Wilshire. It was one of those establishments where you can sit outside and eat. James and Gavin were just about to leave (because it had started getting dark and chilly) when suddenly a car pulled up. Three thuggish-looking youths of the Caucasian Mole persuasion got out of the vehicle to approach Gavin and James. One of the young men seemed to be clutching something under his jacket. James and Gavin, both tensing, began to rise from their seats. That's when the fellow pulled out his gun, pointing it at James.

"Don't even think on movin', brother man!" one of the thugs barked at James as the gunman stepped over and snatched the tiny holster containing James' cellular phone from his belt. The fellow hadn't counted on James' speed though. With a swift movement, James knocked the gun out of his antagonist's hand. Then he threw said antagonist right into the arms of his partner. Needless to say, the three men were barely able to all get back inside their car before an unseen fourth party drove it off, tires screeching.

"Oh shit!" was all Gavin could say. James bent down to pick up the gun.

One of the waitresses ran outside. "Christ, I've never seen anybody move that fast! Are you all right?!?" Her porcelain white skin was, at the moment, flushed with red.

James nodded. "Yep, I'm good."

The lady rushed back inside. "I'll call the police!" she said over her shoulder.

Gavin slumped back down into one of the chairs. For once in his life he was completely and utterly speechless.

The police came, took descriptions, and asked questions. Finally, an hour later, the two weary friends were done and on their way home. Until James pulled in front of Gavin's house, not a word was said.

"James, man...you sure you don't wanna come inside for a sec?" Gavin noticed James hadn't cut off the engine. All James did in response was shaking his head slowly and give his friend a strange look. Then, before another word could be said, it happened. James leaned over without even hesitating...planting a soft, passion-filled kiss on Gavin's lips. At first, Gavin tensed...but he let himself relax as he felt his body temperature go up, along with the intensity of his heartbeat. It seemed like an eternity that ended all too quickly, when James finally parted mouths with his friend.

"Good night, Gavin." he smiled, showing all 32 teeth, rubbing his chin, looking satisfied. Slow and zombie-like, Gavin got out of the car and went inside his house.

It was around three in the morning and Gavin hadn't been able to sleep. He'd been lying there in bed all night staring at the ceiling. He felt like he was having a dream, and like any minute now he'd awaken from it. No such luck. The phone rang, startling him. He knew who it was.

"Hello James."

"Whazzup," said the deep, now-dreamier-than-ever voice on the other end.

"I don't know...you called me."

"Hah, you're so crazy."

"Call me what you want. It's simply not true, and don't you ever sleep?"

"Nope."

"So...how does it feel to be twenty-seven?"

"It's alright."

"Yo ass is old now."

"Yeah, whatever. So what did you think of my goodbye present?"

"I don't know what I'm suppose to think."

"Gavin, check this out....we've been running buddies for a while now, you know..."

"Yeah, we have."

"...And I think of you like family. At the same time, I've been finding myself...you know, wondering...what if everything I keep looking for out there has been here right in front of me all the time. Tonight, man, when those punks tried to jack us...I thought to myself what if...what if the worst happened, you know? Tomorrow's not promised to nobody."

"True."

"I just...didn't wanna go out without ever exploring these feelings." James sighed heavily, as if a load had been removed from his shoulders.

"Wow. I...don't know what to say, James---except I...I feel the same way..."

"But?"

"Well, I just don't wanna damage the friendship we've got. That's where I'm at."

"I feel what you're saying."

"You know what you did yesterday...you took a mighty big risk."

"Yeah, I know---but I've been wanting to do that to you for a while, buddy."

"You nut, I'm not talking about no kisses. I meant knocking that gun out of the guy's hand! What were you thinking about, anyway?"

"Man, don't sweat it. It's over. Let's move on, you know what I'm sayin?"

"Okay."

"Thank you."

At a quarter to ten that morning James dropped by to pick up Gavin for their regular three-times-a-week work-out. Work-outs usually lasted anywhere from forty-five minutes to an hour. This morning's lasted a little longer. James pushed himself to his limit and then some. It was almost as if something had possessed him and he couldn't stop. Eventually, Gavin just sat back to watch. He knew from past experiences that his friend must have had something on his mind. Gavin couldn't deny the fact that this work-out session was definitely different from all the previous ones. For one thing, Gavin found himself gazing lingeringly at James' magnificent, sweat-soaked musculature. Also, for some reason...every time James hot and moistened skin came into contact with his own, it made Gavin feel something warm and gentle stirring within. The feeling made him nervous. Gavin took a deep breath and sat up on the curling bench he'd been lying on. James walked over, setting down the two dumb-bells he'd been using for the past fifteen minutes. Then he motioned for Gavin to slide back, and sat on the bench himself, facing his friend. There was a look on James' face which asked, "What's wrong?", as he wiped the perspiration from his face with a towel. Gavin smiled, holding his arm out so James would be aware of the time on his watch.

"So?" James commented as he licked his lips, tasting salty perspiration.

"James, you are a trip. I have a meeting to attend, or did you forget? And I didn't bring a change of clothes...We gotta amscray."

James nodded in response.

"My bad partner. I got clothes you can wear at my place from when you stayed over awhile ago." Gavin stood up.

"Yeah, that's a good idea. I can save some time because I won't have to go back home."

"Mi casa es su case, amigo."

"Whatever. Let's go."

In record speed James got to his apartment. There Gavin quickly showered and dressed. Gavin stepped out of the bathroom, wearing a white dress-shirt and black pants. James was watching a talk show and barely seemed to notice Gavin standing in front of him.

"Do you think I need to iron this shirt?"

James sighed before responding.

"I think you need to move so I can see the TV."

Gavin looked around, saw the TV remote on the floor and picked it up.

"I think your butt watches too much damn TV and you need to free your mind! Does it ever occur to you there is a world outside?"

Grinning, Gavin clicked the TV off. "Why do you watch that show anyway? Don't you know they stage all those fi..."

James didn't let Gavin finish. He leaped from the couch, trying to snatch the remote from his friend. Gavin ended up wrestling with James who outweighed him by about sixty pounds. At one point during the playful contest, something strange happened. James had Gavin by the wrists and on his back, when suddenly he bent down...Once again, he let his lips merge with Gavin's. This time, there was no stopping the passion between the two men. Needless to say, no one really won the battle for the remote, as it was dropped and abandoned onto the carpet. Needless to say, Gavin never made it to that meeting.

It was a good thing Gavin and James were both working only thirty-something hours a week and had very flexible schedules. Both men had employment in the entertainment industry. This was one of the main reasons they'd clicked so well. Gavin was a promoter, while James dabbled in music production---mostly from his own studio near by.

The sun was on its way out when Gavin walked onto James' balcony. James followed.

"I wondered how they got along at that meeting without me," James came to stand beside Gavin and smiled bashfully, looking down over the balcony's edge.

"I'm sorry, man...it...I couldn't stop myself." He slowly shook his head as Gavin turned to look at him.

"we're gonna have to finish this conversation later. I need to get going."

James leaned over, trying to plant a kiss on Gavin's neck, but Gavin wasn't having it. He pulled away.

"James, I can't do..."

With a frustrated expression, Gavin walked away to open the balcony door. He entered James' living room but he kept walking. James caught him by the arm as he exited the apartment building minutes later.

"Gavin...?"

"What?"

"What's the matter with you?"

"I..."

"Don't fight it, baby..."

With that, James took Gavin in his arms and tasted his lips again. Gavin tried to resist, but James kept going for his...

Neither of the two men noticed the black Explorer slowing down in the street as it went past the front of the building. Inside the vehicle were Veronica and Charlton Webber, Jr.---Gavin's parents. Neither could believe their eyes. Knowing and accepting their son's sexuality was one thing for Veronica, but actually seeing it in effect was something else altogether.

"Charlie, can you believe that?!? Gavin and James?!? Lord have mercy! And right out in the open for everybody to see!"

"Veronica, they don't seem to have a problem with that."

"Excuse me?"

"They're grown men. They ain't breaking no laws."

The Explorer picked up speed and disappeared around a corner. Gavin finally pulled away from James.

"James, are you crazy?! We are right out in the open! Jeez!"

James blushed. "Sorry dude. I guess I...you bring out the animal in me. But it's cool...Ain't nobody around, see?"

Gavin looked over James' shoulder. Then he sighed and shook his head, slowly looking down. A smile spread across Gavin's face. James smiled too, but he was unsure why.

"What's on your mind, kid?"

"James, I feel like such a..." Gavin stopped, momentarily sucking his teeth. "...I don't know why I'm acting like I'm mad at you, man. There's just so much going on in my head right now."

"Wanna talk about it?"

"...Well, yeah---but at my house." Gavin glanced at his watch. "I'm expecting a visit from my folks."

"Okay, we can split. You drive." James tossed Gavin his keys.

"You're letting me drive your car?"

"It's...our car, Gavin. It's always been like that. You just never asked. I would've let you drive anytime."

"Really? Okay."

As Gavin drove to his house, he found himself taking in the sights and sounds of Los Angeles in a way he hadn't done since he first moved there so many years past. While he and James conversed, it seemed as if all the city lights were warming his soul. It was an exhilarating feeling, yet it also worried Gavin somewhat. Up until now he'd pretty much accepted that someone like James could never be interested in an individual such as himself. The guys James usually dated (and seemed more attracted to) were, whether masculine or feminine, full-time "B-Boys." Although Gavin enjoyed hip-hop, he never kidded himself. He was definitely not the B-Boy type. Gavin was an R&B type!

Mr. and Mrs. Webber had already arrived at Gavin's and let themselves in with their own keys. They were sitting on the couch viewing a Teena Marie concert when Gavin and James walked in.

"Hi, mother and father!"

Gavin walked over to hug Veronica while James shook Charlton's hand.

"Well, it sure took you long enough, boy! James, we are going out to dinner. Will you be joining us?" Veronica knew James wouldn't turn her down and he didn't.

After a few minutes of chatting, Gavin went upstairs to his bedroom

so he could check the answering machine, James hung around downstairs talking mostly sports with Charlton until Gavin covertly paged him upstairs. When James went upstairs Veronica turned to Charlton.

"Well...I guess I might as well accept my son won't be bringing home grand-kids." Charlton laughed softly.

"If he did bring home any, who do you think they'd be keeping up at night crying? Us, that's who! So I don't have a complaint."

Upstairs, Gavin handed a folded-up letter to James when he entered the room, then sat on the bed.

"What is it?" James wanted to know.

"Uh, I think you better read it..."

The letter read:

Gavin,

Years ago, when we first discovered you were gay...when you brought it to our attention, we took it in stride, but inside it hurt. It hurt us because of so many reasons, none of which were your fault, son. You see, as time went by, our views on so many things changed. Wisdom does come in time to those who seek it. We know it was not easy for you to talk with us---and there were, somewhere along the line, things said...things we may have said out of our ignorance. And even if some things we said were jokes, well, in our hearts, we feel we owe it to you---we ask your forgiveness for...

"You need to go see a Christian counselor to change you."

"The Devil's spirit is what's inside you, making you feel that way."

"A homosexual can't enter God's kingdom."

"You chose this lifestyle. Don't blame it on nothing else."

"What you are isn't normal. God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve."

"Don't bring none of your friends around here."

You are our son, Gavin, and nothing can change that. We love you. We won't let anything tear our relationship with you apart. You will never know just how proud we are of you, son. Maybe we will never completely understand everything that you do, but we hope you never misunderstand when we tell you our lives would be incomplete without you. Also, never forget your mother and father are always here for good times and bad times. Please come home more often...not just on the holidays, Gavin. Thanks for being so patient and understanding of us old folks and our ways.

You Mother and Father

Gavin felt his eyes watering and he shook his head, smiling as James handed him back the letter.

"This is deep, man...but I thought your parents was always cool with you being gay."

"I...hadn't ever really felt like a family member until now, James. On the surface everything seemed alright, but...there was always a glass wall between me and my family."

"So now you think it's breaking down, huh?"

"Yeah, I believe it is."

"That's beautiful, man. You're lucky to have folks like you do. No everybody's got it that good."

James gave Gavin a look that made him feel a chill. There was so much longing in James' eyes...his voice as well.

"James, don't belittle the relationship you have with your family now It might not be the way you'd want it to be, but a lot of people out there don't have any kind of anything with their family."

"True, true."

"And if you never tell your preaching father, I won't be mad at you Believe me, your mother---rest her soul---knows her son and still loves him."

"Thanks, man. Now you done got me feeling all sentimental-like!" James punctuated his statement with an uneasy laugh.

Gavin walked over and pulled his window curtains wide so he could look outside. For once, the sky was clear. Gavin could see all the stars. James came to stand behind him. He massaged Gavin's neck gently.

"What are you thinkin about?"

"You know how it is when you just dream about something, then...all of a sudden..."

"You get it?"

"Yeah, James...that feels pretty good..."

"I always wished and tried not to ever give up my dream for a happy ending to my story. It's pretty tricky, holding on. You know what I mean?"

"Yeah, baby."

"Baby?"

"Yeah...I can't call you that?"

Gavin sucked his teeth. "James..."

"Gavin..."

The two men hugged each other. They held on for a long time savoring the moment. Then they began to move slowly, as the sound of Tune In Tomorrow by Teena Marie could be heard from downstairs. Someone must have increased the volume. Before they knew it Gavin and James were slow dancing around the bedroom. Gavin managed to dim the light.

"This must be a dream, James."

"Nah, baby...This is the happy ending you been waiting for."

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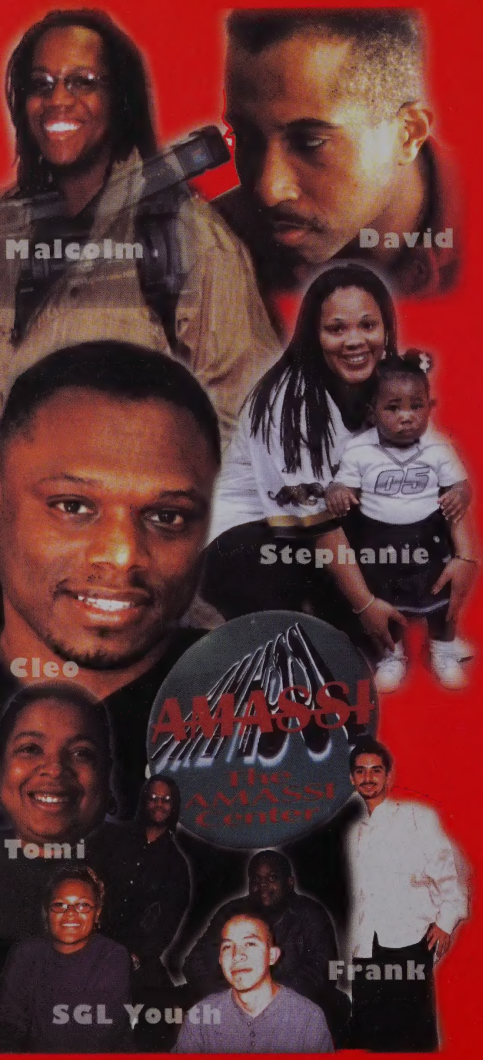

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Jazz-Up Aerobics & Body Sculpturing

Sustaining Our Sistahood

African-American/Latino
Same-Gender-Loving (SGL)
Youth Empowerment Project

WEDNESDAY
SGL Brothers N' Luv

THURSDAY
Circle of Love

Black Men's Circle

FRIDAY
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Black Men's Xchange

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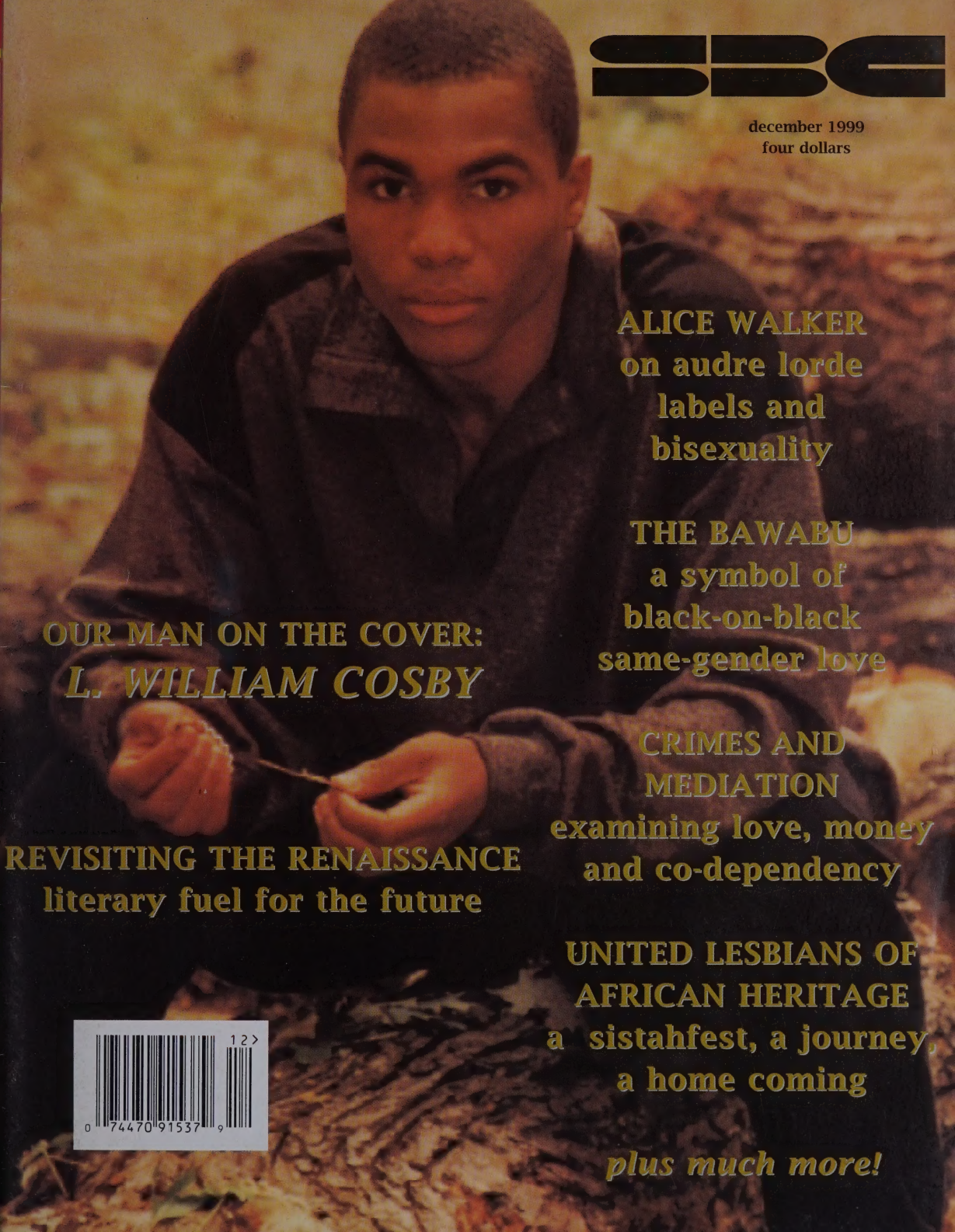

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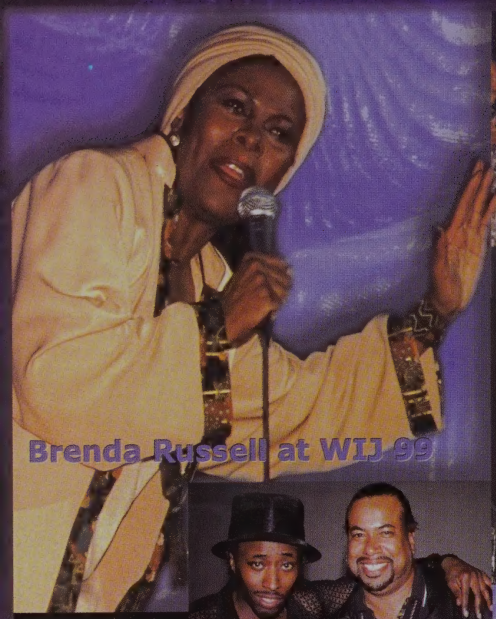
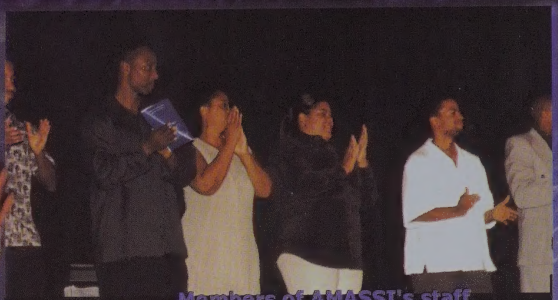
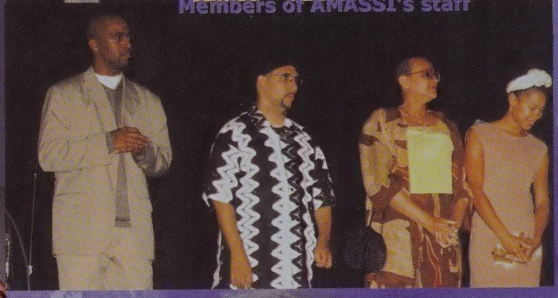


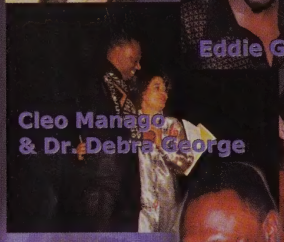
Brenda Russell at WIJ 99



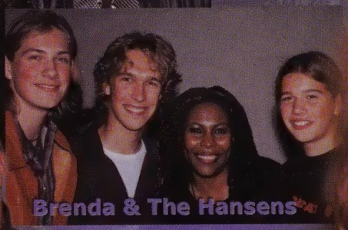
Members of AMASSI's staff



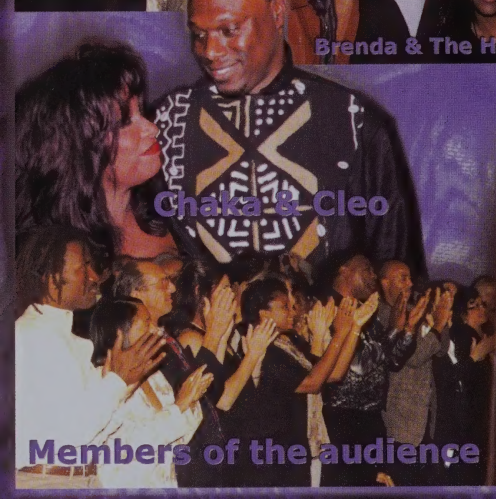
Eddie Griffin & Friend



Cleo Manago & Dr. Debra George



Brenda & The Hansens



Chaka & Cleo

Members of the audience

Chaka Khan at WIJ 99

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AMASSI-L.A. Thanks Chaka, Brenda, Special Guests and The Community For a Very Sucessful Women In Jazz (WIJ) 1999

AMASS

Greetings From Da Hood®

"Cards that speak to our unique heritage and culture"

A division of PatBrina Artful Creations©

Happy Kwanzaa and endless prayers throughout the New Year, as we work together as one family, one community, one people.

May these principles guide you into the true spirit of this Holiday season.

Happy Kwanzaa!

May all God's children (young and old) enjoy peace & prosperity throughout the year.

Cover

A Christmas Prayer

May the joy of Christmas spark a flame in your heart that burns with eternal love.

Remember the reason for this season is to celebrate the birth of Christ our Savior. May He reign in our hearts and minds always.

Merry Christmas!

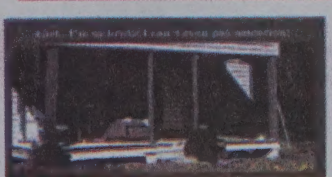
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Mama 'soon. That's who, and you're invited too!

Happy Holiday

But, I was combing my hair.

Happy be-lated birthday



But, I found this card. Happy Birthday!

Groove proudly into the new millennium with

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Look for our web site starting Nov. 1, 1999 (www.patbrina.com)

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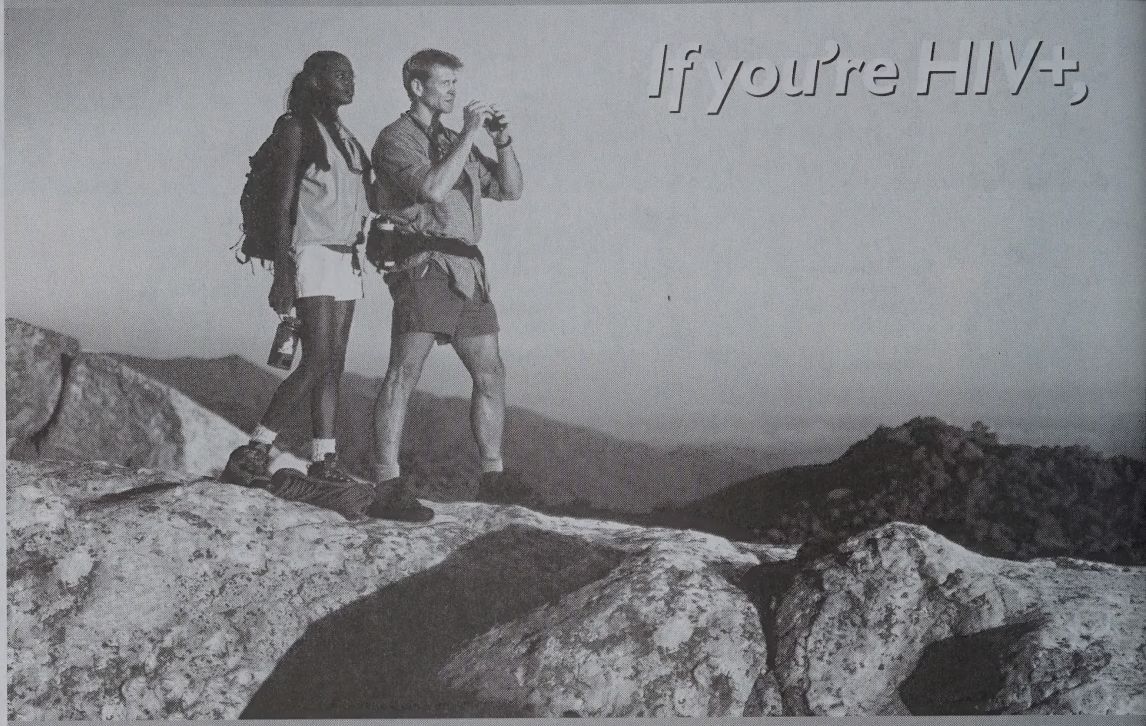

Being HIV+ isn't easy.

It's a daily challenge that can take all you've got. It helps to have an advantage—to lighten your load and keep you going. Federal healthcare guidelines now call for including a potent protease inhibitor as part of combination treatments to fight HIV. Consider these reasons to make the protease inhibitor CRIXIVAN the foundation of your treatment regimen.

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 T-cell count. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

NIH research showed people taking CRIXIVAN in triple therapy lived longer and experienced fewer opportunistic infections.

Recent year-long research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (Protocol ACTG 320) studied over 1,000 patients and confirmed results from another study.

The group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. This reduction was significant enough for the NIH to recommend the study be stopped, so that all participants could benefit from the findings. Because the study was ended early, there was insufficient data to determine the statistical impact of CRIXIVAN on survival.

CRIXIVAN in triple therapy continues to hold serum viral load down below the limit of detection at the one-year mark.

In a separate, ongoing landmark study, over 90% of the 31 patients receiving CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their HIV serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks (as measured by available tests; the virus may still be present in other organ systems).

Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one-year mark.

MERCK

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www.crixivan.com

CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.

CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated.

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. There are side effects associated with protease inhibitors in general and CRIXIVAN in particular. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems.

As with other protease inhibitors, changes in body fat, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Additionally, severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients also taking cholesterol lowering medicines called "statins". Please read the following page for detailed information on side effects and dosing.

Focus on the rest of your life.

Learn all you can about HIV therapy. Talk with your doctor. Stay informed and stay the course. With viral load below the limit of detection and an increase in CD4 T-cells, it's easier to look forward to the future with confidence.

There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

Please read the following page for more detailed information about CRIXIVAN.

Remember to ask your doctor about CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Going the distance.

CRIXIVAN® (indinavir sulfate) Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

9024509

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays". If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:
   dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquids (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia
- High cholesterol and you are taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins".

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

*Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?***

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)	isoniazid (INH)
BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)	DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Methadone

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXIVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

RESCRIPTOR® (delavirdine) — If you take CRIXIVAN with RESCRIPTOR®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SPORANOX® (itraconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SPORANOX®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SUSTIVA™, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors, including CRIXIVAN, together with some of the cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." Call your doctor if you develop severe muscle pain or weakness.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: allergic reactions; severe skin reactions; yellowing of the skin and/or eyes; abdominal swelling; indigestion; inflammation of the kidneys; inflammation of the pancreas; joint pain; depression; itching; hives; change in skin color; hair loss; ingrown toenails with or without infection; crystals in the urine; painful urination; and numbness of the mouth.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°- 86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This leaflet provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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MERCK & CO., INC.
West Point, PA 19486, USA

CRIXIVAN® (indinavir sulfate) Capsules

MERCK

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Auditions for Singers

gay men's chorus of los angeles

Jon Bailey, Artistic Director
Brian J. Wyatt, Managing Director

GMCLA is holding auditions for new singing members in January 2000. All interested singers should attend open rehearsals on January 10th and 17th. Private auditions will be scheduled at that time.

Auditions include singing a prepared song, as well as an evaluation of musical skills. Final selection is based on these factors, as well as need within each section of the Chorus. Three major concerts are given each year with three to four performances each. All are required along with regular rehearsals held each Monday evening, 7-10 pm, in Hollywood. ■

Contact the Chorus office at **1-800-MEN-SING** for more information.
Or visit our website at **gmclahq@earthlink.net**.

CoNTeNTS

DECEMBER 1999

Zora Neal Hurston

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iN CoNCePT.

sbc photo by Tory

I was recently made aware of a disturbing incident within our community. A group of brothers in a book club were choosing a new work for discussion. It was offered that instead of buying the book, they would get one and Xerox bootleg copies for distribution to the other members. I was shocked and saddened by this most unscrupulous suggestion. Art theft, intellectual theft, is a most serious crime against the culture and should not be condoned under any circumstances. The author is the owner of the work and making copies without the owner's specific permission is beyond criminal. It is sinful.

$upport our voices. Don't steal their breath. Don't steal their soul.

Never before have we seen a greater number of small Black publishing houses such as GrapeVine Press, Ishai Books, Redbone Press, Moyo Books, Mountain Top Publishing, International Black Writers and Artists, ProCord Books, to name a few, turning out dozens of books, fiction and non-fiction, on the lives, the loves, the struggles and the triumphs of African American hetero- and homosexuals. Never before have our words been freer, uncensored by the major publishing house monopoly who find our literary adventures, discussions, and challenges too indelicate, too bold, too Black and too real for their taste. We are finally in control of our literary culture. Do not be a part of the book burning by dilution, by literary theft. Support the proliferation of our deepest thoughts, of our shared experiences, of our selves as reflected in the glorious words of our village storytellers, and show them the financial gratitude they deserve.

Stealing royalties from our writers is like stealing candy from a baby. Easily done but low on the list of human behavior.

$upport our voices. Don't steal their breath. Don't steal their soul.

I don't even lend out my books anymore. I encourage friends to go out and buy the books. This holiday season I encourage all to give the gift of the written word. Give a friend a book, afford the writer the chance to keep on writing. Don't deny the writer subsistence, a decent living. Don't be the grinch that stole the thinking mind.

Stanley Bennett Clay

SBC

The Africentric Homosexual Magazine published bi-monthly

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Gay Pride
Gay Power
Gay Passion

We celebrate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community and ALL its diversity!

We are excited by the present and optimistic about the future. We are anxious for a time when HIV/AIDS, cancer and other currently life-threatening illnesses no longer rob us of our lives or our loved ones! Until then, we empower people living with life-threatening illnesses and seniors (anyone age 70 or older regardless of their health) to live the longest, highest-quality life possible by getting the money needed to live their life to its fullest! We provide compassionate, confidential, personalized viatical and senior settlement information, counseling and advocacy. Our goal is to get you the highest possible offer in the shortest amount of time, with the least amount of hassle and anxiety for you.

"There is a general feeling in the African-American Community that people won't benefit from a Viatical Settlement. But that isn't true. Viatical Settlements have changed a lot and are continuing to evolve. You need a friend in the business — someone you can trust to help you understand how to create financial stability and security. We are here to help. My teammates and I can answer your questions and show you how to create a better future for yourself!"

– Marvin K. Carter

Allison Rodman
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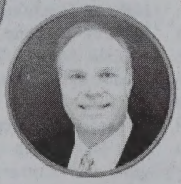

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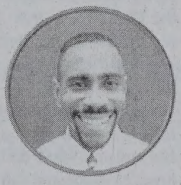

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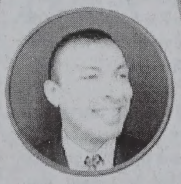

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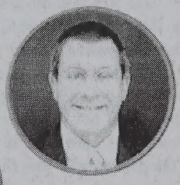

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411

1,500 MARCH ON OAKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT DURING 'CREATING CHANGE' CONFERENCE

Oakland, California---Some 1,500 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people marched on the Oakland Police Department Saturday night, November 13th, in response to a police officer's slur toward a young African American transgendered person who was the victim of a hate crime.

The march took place during the 12th annual Creating Change conference in Oakland. Creating Change is sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Late Friday evening, a transgendered woman whose name is being withheld to protect her privacy was attacked by two assailants several blocks from the Creating Change conference. An Oakland police officer responding to the attack said, according to witnesses, 'I am tired of having to do all this paperwork. You guys have been told not to be on the corner of 14th and Broadway. I am tired of your shit. Who has to do the paperwork? Me, that's who.'

Activists attending Creating Change learned of the attack throughout the day Saturday. Lead by local organizers, a march and peaceful protest was quickly planned. "What happened last night is a classic case of blame the victim," said NGLTF Executive Director Kerry Lobel. "Transgendered people are not paperwork."

"Creating Change is about transformation," Lobel added. "I hope this event transforms the Oakland Police Department into a caring, sensitive department whose officers, each and every one, understand the words ''to protect and to serve.'"

Pete King, president of East Bay Pride, said violence against GLBT people needs to be met with an immediate response whenever it occurs. "The attack last night is not an isolated occurrence unique to Oakland," King said. "It happens across the United States every day. Women, people of color, people of all faith traditions and people of all gender identities deserve to live free from fear in our city and our country. The victims of these hideous crimes need to be treated with sensitivity and compassion by the police and by other institutions."

Local leaders demanded that the Oakland Police Department investigate the incident, provide sensitivity training to police officers and open a dialogue on GLBT concerns.

DOCUMENTARY ON RUTH ELLIS, 100 YEAR OLD AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN, RE-SCREENS AT L.A.'S OUTFEST@ THE VILLAGE

Hollywood, California---A reprise screening of the OUTFEST 1998 Audience Award Winner for OUTstanding Documentary Video on the life of African-American 100 year old Lesbian Activist, Ruth Ellis---*Ruth Ellis @100*---will take place December 15, 1999 at 7 PM. Ruth Ellis is a true portrait of ferocity: She has a web site and an intense daily workout schedule. She loves to dance and can do the electric slide like a pro. Director Yvonne Welbon captures the endearing essence of Elder Ellis, the oldest out African American lesbian in the country whose best advise is to be kind and to live always by the Golden Rule. It becomes clear watching Ruth reminisce about her life as a "woman lover" that she is a living link to the past, and her stories are key to understanding the struggles and accomplishments of lesbians throughout the century.

On the same bill will be Durand Williams' documentary *DW*, which is the African-American filmmakers challenge of and grappling with the enduring legacy of racial misrepresentations in the work of early 19th century racist filmmaker D.W. Griffith. This film is being presented in collaboration with The Pan African Film and Art Festival.

OUTFEST @ THE VILLAGE is a collaboration between OUTFEST and The Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center's Community Outreach and Education Department. All OUTFEST screenings take place at The Village, 1125 North McCadden Place in Hollywood (one block East of Highland, North of Santa Monica Bl.). For further information call 323.960.9200.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO "BLACK GIRLHOOD: AN ANTHOLOGY"

Worchester, Maine---Contributions are sought for a proposed anthology on the topic of girlhood in African American and Diasporic African Women's Fiction and Autobiography. Essays which explore girlhood and coming-of-age as themes within Black women's literature are welcome.

Essays can explore (but are not limited to) the following novels and autobiographies: The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison, The Color Purple by Alice Walker, I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou, Zami by Audre Lorde, Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga, Push by Sapphire, Annie John by Jamaica Kincaid, Mama's Girls by Veronica Chambers, Breath, Eyes, Memory by Edwidge Danticat.

Of particular interest are essays about sexuality, race and images of beauty, violence against girls, and mother-daughter relationships, as well as perspectives on Nation, identity and oppression. Scholarly essays are welcome, as well as personal reaction papers and collaborations between women and girls.

Send double spaced manuscripts (between 25 and 30 pages) in hard copy, a brief biographical statement, and a stamped self-addressed envelop to the address below. Presently seeking a publisher for this volume. Preliminary deadline of December 15, 1999 for inclusion in book proposal package. For all other contributions, the deadline is January 31, 2000. For questions, please contact the editor, via email at: atchison71@aol.com or write to : Gabrie'l Atchison, Ph.D./ c/o Women's Studies/ Clark University/ 950 Main Street/ Worcester, MA 01610

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411

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE PROPONENTS BEGIN INITIATIVE PETITION CAMPAIGN

Los Angeles, California---The proponents of an initiative constitutional amendment allowing same-sex couples to marry in California announced today that the California Secretary of State has authorized them to begin circulating petitions to place the measure on the November 2000 ballot.

"On this Thanksgiving Day, we begin our efforts to gather a million signatures from Californians who want to extend the right to marry to include committed same-sex couples," said Tom Henning of Californians for Same-Sex Marriage (CaSSM), a campaign committee organized to secure the passage of the initiative. "That means a million conversations about the rightness and goodness of our relationships."

Henning added that the committee's web site, which has been operating for about two months, has already had thousands of visitors and has helped the committee to identify hundreds of individuals willing to circulate petition forms. Now that the forms are available, the committee projects that thousands of additional petition gatherers will come forward to assist in the effort. In addition to the petition forms themselves, the web site for the proposed initiative contains a first-ever "Petition Center" that allows signature gatherers to track their progress, communicate with each other, and organize efforts in their individual counties.

The proposed same-sex marriage initiative would amend the California Constitution to read: "Two people of the same sex may lawfully marry in California. Such a marriage is subject to the same provisions of California law applicable to other marriages. The partners to the marriage shall meet the same legal requirements as other married persons, and they shall have the same legal rights and obligations as other married persons. This section does not require any church, religion or religious organization to perform any marriage ceremony. This section supersedes any California law.

The proposed initiative stands in stark contrast to another initiative already scheduled for the March 7, 2000 ballot. Proposition 22, also known as the "Knight Initiative" after its author, State Senator "Pete" Knight (R-Palmdale), would amend an existing California law to state that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

Henning predicted that Proposition 22 would go down to defeat in March, and that voters would then "take the affirmative step of ensuring equal marriage rights for same-sex couples by approving a same-sex marriage initiative in November."

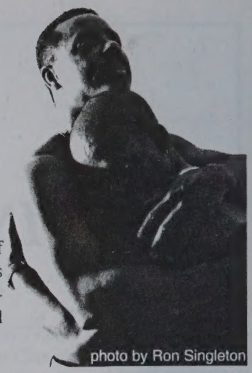


photo by Ron Singleton

Henning noted that even if Proposition 22 were to pass in March, the proposed same-sex marriage initiative would override it next November.

The Californians for Same-Sex Marriage web site is at http://www.samesexmarriage.org

AT THE BEACH HOLDS MILLENNIUM NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Los Angeles, California---At the Beach continues its New Year's Eve tradition with a Millennium New Year's Eve Party to be held this year at the Ivy Substation, 9070 W. Venice Blvd. in the Culver City section of Los Angeles. The formal event will be capped with special surprise guest entertainment.

The Millennium Party will be held from 9 PM until 3 AM with dancing to the music of Calvin Williams of New York City's Octagon as well as music by L.A.'s own top female spinner, E-Que. An elegant buffet dinner will be served with a champagne toast at midnight. In addition, there will be a nationwide New Year's Eve broadcast feed.

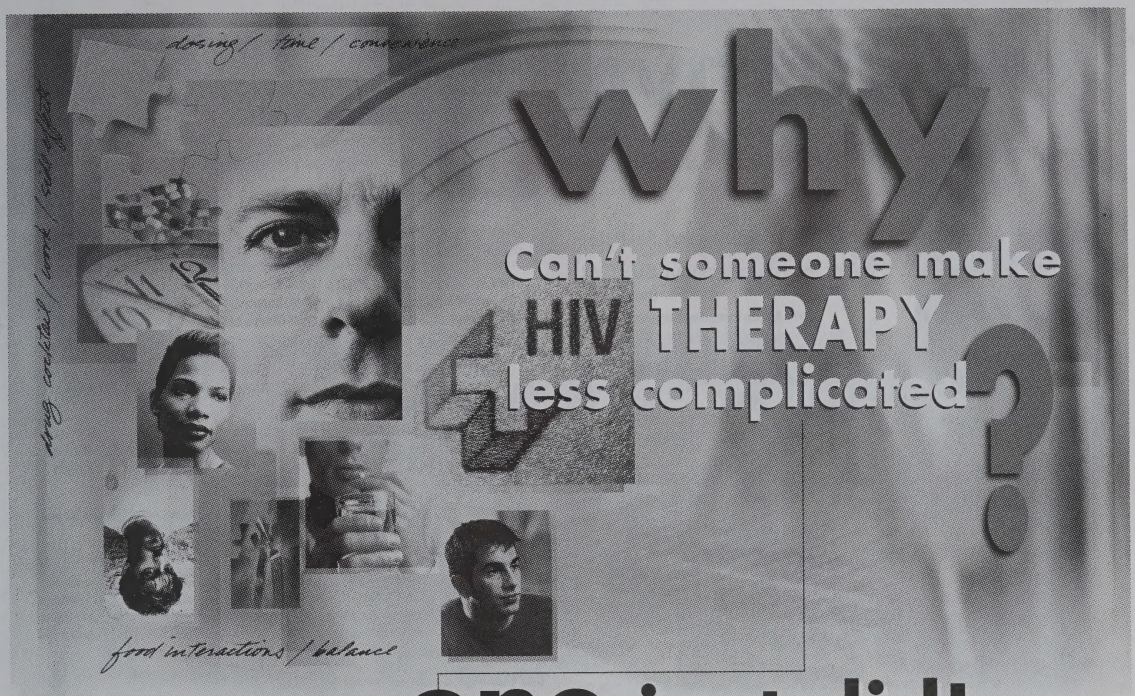
Operating as At the Beach, Shorey, Inc., the business venture, run by an astute board of Black same gender-loving male and female entrepreneurs, has produced the popular and highly profitable At the Beach Unity Celebration for the past 11 years in Malibu, California on the 4th of July Weekend. Last year over 11,000 predominately African American same gender-loving women and men attended the four-day event, making it the largest such gathering West of the Mississippi.

"The New Year's Eve party was the first 'brand extension'; of the ATB franchise," said newly installed ATB President Deborah Thurston, "Now it has become an event in its own right."

At the Beach began in the summer of 1988 with an informal group of friends enjoying a day of planned activities and socializing "at the beach." Eleven years later, participants come from across the country and as far away as Nigeria, Ghana, Mexico, Venezuela, France and England to network and have fun in the sun.

In addition to the annual beach party and New Year's Eve celebration, At the Beach produces other events throughout the year with a major affair scheduled for Memorial Day.

At the Beach can be contacted at 323.293.4ATB or by email at atbla@aol.com



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SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

Now listed among preferred anti-HIV drugs in government guidelines.[1]

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

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For more information on the updated DHHS Guidelines, a PDF file of the guidelines is available at http://www.hivatis.org

1. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), December 1998.

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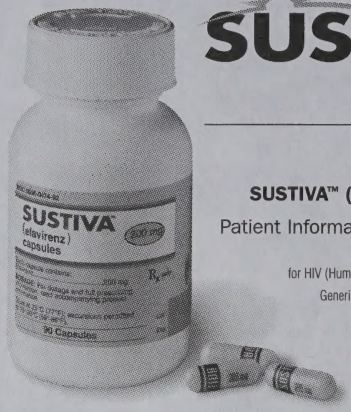

SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA*

(sus-TEE-vah)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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P9U35

THE BAWABU: A Symbol of Black-on-Black Same-Gender Love

by
Leland Gale

The first public display of the Bawabu symbol was on June 28, 1998 at the groundbreaking community debate in Los Angeles, California. There the subject of homosexuality in the Black community was addressed. As Cleo Manago, founder of the Same-Gender-Loving movement, debated the subject with scholar and therapist Dr. Llaila Afrika before a gathering of hetero- and homosexual members of the local Black community who openly gathered together for, arguably, the first time, the sense of oneness, albeit agreement to disagreement, was evident. The presence of same gender-loving Black people in the Black community was and is now a recognized fact.

To that end, The Bawabu symbol was created by artist Olu Kwasi Osei as a self-identification of Afrika-centered Black conscious homosexuals, quickly and popularly becoming known as Same-Gender-Loving (SGL) persons.

(c) 1999 Olu Kwasi Osei

"The Bawabu is a celebration of Black men who love Black men and Black women who love Black women. It is a visual affirmation of Same-Gender-Loving women and men who love Afrikan peoples and struggle on a daily basis for their uplift and empowerment." states the brochure being disseminated throughout the national Black community. "As Afrikan people we have a rich history of creativity that spans thousands of years. It is psychologically unhealthy for us---the people who gave the world the gifts of civilization, religion, science---to continue to embrace the symbols of European cultures. This is especially true when these "cultures" have been, and continue to be, involved in the systematic oppression and exploitation of Afrikan peoples."

In an introductory letter from symbol creator Osei, he emphasizes that the Bawabu symbol represents "a complete rejection of Eurocentric 'gay and lesbian' symbols by Afrika-centered Sisters and Brothers e.g. lambdas, pink triangles and designs derived from the 'rainbow' flag."

The official brochure further states that "the word Bawabu is taken from the Kiswahili language and means 'gatekeeper.' The Same-Gender-Loving Movement's symbol is named the Bawabu in homage to our same-gender-loving Afrikan ancestors. Many of these ancestors were honored or recognized by their societies as being the 'gatekeepers' to the ethereal world. It was believed that this spiritual world could be entered through a series of doors or 'gates.' The unique ability to grant entrance into the spiritual world was derived, in part, from the 'gatekeepers' sexual orientation.."

In her book *The Spirit of Intimacy: Ancient Teachings in the Ways of Relationships*, Sobonfu Some' states, "Gatekeeping is part of one's life purpose, announced before birth and developed through rigorous initiatory training to ensure that it's power is not misused. A gatekeeper is responsible for a whole village, a whole tribe. Gatekeeping is not a game."

The official brochure also points out that the recognition of same-gender-loving ancestors by many ancient Afrikan societies completely contradicts common held beliefs about homosexuality and its relationship to the Afrikan Diaspora: "It is not unusual to hear misguided 'Afrika-centered' women and men state that homosexuality is a white perversion, 'embraced' by Afrikans and those of Afrikan descent, as the result of contamination by European influences. These notions have been completely refuted by the rediscovery of the 'gatekeepers' and their importance to traditional Afrikan life."

In what has become a growing and powerful coalition of Black consciousness homosexual organization throughout the United States, the Same-Gender-Loving Movement is becoming a force to be reckoned with. And The Bawabu symbol can be expected be make its appearance at many of the Black Homosexual political, social and cultural functions that gather almost monthly.

The one challenge, however, may prove to be one of semantics. Olu, the creator and copyright owner of the Bawabu symbol, forbids it's use to any organization that has 'gay and/or lesbian' in it's title, or the reference to the symbol as the 'Black gay and lesbian symbol'. Most of the Black homosexual organizations throughout the country have either gay and/or lesbian in their name.

The use of the Bawabu symbol is free to any organization that reflects the Same-Gender-Loving movement. However, commercial use of the symbol requires a formal licensing agreement between the organization and Project Bawabu, the symbol's copyright and trademark owner. For more information and permission to use the Bawabu write to: Project Bawabu/ c/o Olu Kwasi Osei/ 1195 Keniston Avenue/ Los Angeles California 90019-1710, bawabu@netnoir.net

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE LANDS HOMOSEXUAL TEACHER IN JAIL

by Stanley Bennett Clay

Long Beach, California---The photos of the physical abuse bruises on their little bodies are very real, yet the alleged abusive father has not been arrested. Bryan Edney, respected Long Beach, California educator who is openly homosexual and politically active, who reported the incidents to local police, was indeed arrested, spent time in jail for the first time in his life, has been placed on administrative leave without pay and has had major damage done to his otherwise flawless reputation, all based on what appears to be retaliatory accusations of sexual child abuse levied against him by the alleged abusive father. The father also happens to be Edney's brother.

"I had my nephews spend the weekend with me. On Sunday I discovered some bruises on them," Edney recalls. "I asked them what happened and the oldest one said 'Oh, we fell out of bed,' and I said 'If you have a carpeted house, how could falling out of bed cause this?' So finally he put his head down and started crying and said 'Daddy did it.' Their father, according to [the child], beat them with the buckle of a belt because they weren't moving fast enough. I was devastated. Every emotion that could have taken place within me did so. I was frozen with disbelief. They went on to tell me about how this had happened before.

"The next day I took them back to their house and approached my brother about it and he was very defensive. He was angry at me. Not once did he take a look at the bruises. He then told me he had been in anger-management classes. He asked me not to say anything because he didn't want to upset his status in the classes. He only had a few left to go and he didn't want to mess things up. But then I told him, 'How can you do this to your own child?' He then took the children and locked them up in the back bedroom and wouldn't let me talk to them.

"He told me basically that it was none of my business. They were his kids, 'you don't know how bad they are; when you try to discipline your children in different ways, and it's not working...' he tried to make it sound like what resort did he have."

When Bryan returned to school, he discussed the situation with the school counselor. The counselor ran a check on the father's name. It turned out the father had a record of prior instances of both child and spousal abuse.

In part, according to one application for juvenile court petition dated January 30, 1997 from the Palm Springs Police Department to the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, the father had been accused of hitting, on several occasions, the two sons with a brush, a belt and a hanger, causing swollen bruises on the hands, legs, arms, and buttocks of the children.

That's when Bryan reported the situation to the authorities. "But nothing was done for a couple of days. I called back to Child Protective Services, couldn't get a response from anyone, I told them I have pictures and the testimonies of the children. No one would accept it. Finally, I was instructed by the counselor to call the police.

"The police couldn't get into the door because, apparently, my brother was not answering the door. Finally, a week had passed and I had done all I could do---I talked with a Fontana police corporal, I talked to a Long Beach police detective, still nothing was done.

"Finally my brother calls me and curses me out. At that point, with still nothing happening, I had to go to Florida for a teachers' convention. When I get back from Florida---this is sometime in July---I get a call from a police detective, and I'm thinking that finally they're going to do something about this situation."

But much to Bryan's horror and disbelief, the detective had called to inform him that charges had been filed against *him*, claiming that *he* had sexually molested the children.

"I told him of course this was false, this was erroneous. This is retaliation. Check the record. On June 1st I filed a child abuse complaint against [the father] for physical abuse, I have the pictures of the bruises, I have my cousins' testimony. They took the pictures for me. They were all there. They saw the bruises and the children told them what had happened. It was pure retaliation. The detective said thank you. I'll get back to you."

On August 8th, Bryan was at work when he was called to the principal's office. Two detectives presented him with a warrant for his arrest. He was handcuffed and taken down to jail, booked, and fingerprinted.

"They had me locked up from Tuesday until Thursday," he recalls painfully, "I've never ever been arrested. I've never had anything more than just a traffic violation. This was just ridiculous. Apparently, my brother had his wife, who is Caucasian, take the kids down to the police station. They [apparently] intimidated the children into drumming up stories about me. They made my coming out to the kids as something of a sexual seduction. They made me out to be a sexual predator. Every stereotype that exist about homosexuals, or gay teachers, they played on, and the police took it and ran with it.

"At first they had my bail set at $150,000. Fortunately, at my arraignment, the D.A. had the pictures of the bruises and my bail was reduced to $50,000."

A friend was able to come up with the nonrefundable deposit on the bail and Bryan was released. That was back in August. Since then he has been going back and forth to court trying to fight the charges. "The entire focus is off of the people that it should be on in the beginning. There's no physical evidence to substantiate anything they made the children say about me. The children are obviously afraid because

they're in an environment where there is abuse going on.

"Nothing. Nothing, nothing, nothing but racism and, I believe, homophobia within the Long Beach Police Department, is what this is about. They used every stereotype they could about African American men, about gay men and gay teachers and they ran with it."

As Bryan goes through the ordeal of defending himself against unsubstantiated charges, as well as not being able to teach, or even make a living in a profession that he dearly loves, he admits that the feelings of depression are there: "Some days I'm okay, some days I'm angry. I was a good teacher. I am a good teacher. And now I'm on leave without pay. I've been forced to subsist on donations and assistance from family and friends."

Bryan Edney's dilemma is not an unusual situation. Many homosexual men have resisted giving in to their natural paternalistic instincts because of the easily believed 'Children's Hour'-esque trick bag compounded by ethnic sexual myths. Many fine and caring African American teachers and big brothers and mentors could be loss to The Village out of fear of false accusations that destroy without benefit of truth.

So what is to be done? Same gender-loving brothers are as obligated as heterosexual brothers to care for the young warriors of the village. Same gender-loving brothers have the same human impulse and desire to care for the village young.

That desire, that obligation, that God-directed privilege should not be denied our good men, nor should their acts of sharing and giving of themselves, their honorable acts of guardianship make them easy targets and walking examples of ruined lives.

Indeed, there are those, heterosexual as well as homosexual, who engage in sick and unspeakable acts of child molestation, and all efforts must be used to protect society, especially or children, from these shameful individuals. But vigilance can not and should not turn into vigilantism, or racial and/or sexual orientation profiling. The only sexual nature that child molesters have in common is a demented sexual nature. And sexual perverts come in all sizes, shapes, colors, genders, and desires.

As black men, we all know that we are presumed guilty until proven innocent, and we must constantly bond together to defend ourselves against this backwards sense of justice. As Africentric homosexual men, we must do the same. We must bond together and fight for real justice.

Is Bryan Edney guilty as charged? Could be. Could be not. I happen to believe not. But until a court decides, this man, with no evidence against him whatsoever except the coerced accusations of two frightened and beaten little boys, has been forced to go through an ordeal that no presumed innocent man should have to go through. While His union has secured a lawyer for him, the school system has denied him an income. And why? For doing his duty as a teacher, for reporting child abuse, for being an easy target, for being Black and homosexual. I encourage all of you who know Bryan, know of Bryan or are getting to know him in this writing, will contribute to this brother's situation, to help him out with his rent and his bills, will send some bucks of confidence and support, will let your money say 'I support you, my brother.' I hope every brother out there realizes: This could easily be you.

[Donations in the form of checks and money orders should be made out to The Bryan Edney Innocence Fund and sent to The Teachers Association of Paramount/ 17434 Studebaker Rd./ Cerritos, California 90703. The phone number at the Association is 562.924.9311]

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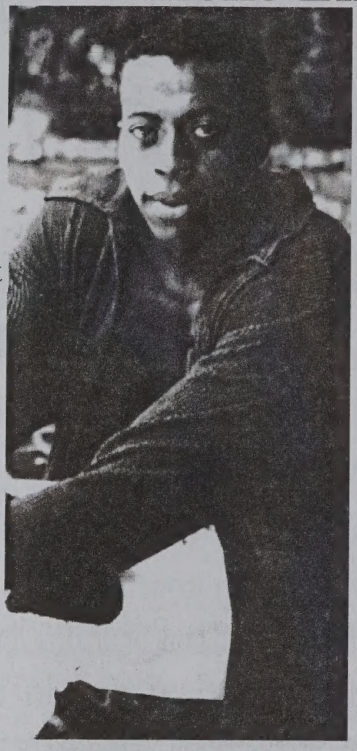

story by
Gerry Proffett

Native Los Angeleno Kran Clay has, over the years, has been well known for many things: serving as an on-air interviewer for a nationally syndicated TV sports show; appearing in commercials as an actor, model and spokesperson in Australia; and running a model and talent Agency here in Hollywood.

Soon, though, Clay's name will be heard in connection with another venture he's involved himself in---the purchase of the Studio City, California piano bar and cocktail lounge, Oasis. Recently, I was able to catch up with Kran and talk with him about his background and his ambitious career, and to ask what led him to the Oasis purchase. I discovered that Clay's entrepreneurial drive is one with strong family precedent.

"My mother's family came to L.A. by the turn of the century," he relates. "My great-granddad worked as a janitor when he first came here and then started a janitorial service and put his sons through school."

One of his great-uncles worked as a policeman, then as a lawyer and judge. His mother involved herself with, among other things, running her own daycare center, and his sister is in the process of opening a beauty school.

"The family credo," Kran states, "is 'Be in business for yourself. Working for someone else will never get you anywhere.' My mom, my cousins, everybody---they all have businesses."

Education, too, plays an important part in the Clay family mindset. "Education was always the first and foremost thing in my family. It was never a choice---you were going to go to school, period."

For Kran, this meant USC, where he completed a communications degree in three years, at the age of twenty. "I chose communications because I was going to gear it toward entertainment in the area of production."

While going to college he worked at Northrop as a computer operations assistant. The skills he learned in this position are ones he went on to refine and to use in landing a string of higher-paying computer analyst jobs.

And during all of this were other projects. There was Kran Clay Productions, which produced a calendar whose proceeds benefited a center for abused women. There was a magazine-format cable-TV show, *Hype Scene*. And there was a position as an associate producer on the nationally syndicated sports show, *The Other Side of Victory*.

"I was the consummate overachiever," Kran says of this period. I did everything. I juggled four careers at the same time...(then) something happened that made me crash and burn. I had to reevaluate my life."

The incident to which he refers was an unfortunate automobile accident. Because of this and other factors Clay eventually chose to take a holiday in Australia for a few weeks. This visit, which lasted three years, turned out to be one of the most enriching and productive periods in Clay's life.

"Within three days of arriving I had an agent. I was booked on a Pepsi commercial (and) I was signed as a spokesperson for this softdrink called (ironically) 'Oasis'."

Summers were spent in Europe, where he would tour with a friend who was pursuing a singing career. "They would just pay me to do whatever," Clay says enthusiastically. "I would just go to a club and the owner would come over and say 'Would you like to dance here? I'll pay you to come here every week and dance on this podium.'"

Part of this popularity Clay attributes to the relative absence of Blacks abroad. "People would come up to you in McDonald's and ask you to just talk with them...I feel infinitely blessed to have been to the places I've been, the different cultures. I think I grew so much from my travels.

"When I came back I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. I know that I came back with money and I thought, 'Ok, let's do something constructive with this money.'"

With a partner, Clay started the Ebony Agency, which casts motion picture and television extras. Later, with a talent agent's license, he began Doubletake Models and Talent, which only takes on current SAG (union) members and which he operates out of his large and elegantly furnished view home in the Hollywood Hills.

Other projects on Clay's slate at the present include a few screenplays, a possible book, and a gay-themed television show. I asked what made him want to add the Oasis purchase to this list .

"I used to go to this little bar in Inglewood (California). It's a neighborhood bar like Cheers. I wanted to buy it because I liked the feeling. The owner wasn't ready to sell and he still isn't."

So, along with a broker, Clay started looking for other joints. Nothing seemed to fit the bill, though, being either too small or too unprofitable. He tried opening a new venue in West Hollywood but found the city's tangle of permits and regulations much too onerous.

In the end, Clay says of the Oasis deal, "I just walked in there and made a cold offer on it." A good move, indeed.

The Oasis functions as one of the more tasteful gay bars in the San Fernando Valley section of Southern, California. Located on the popular Ventura Boulevard near a string of other gay venues---Apache, Oil Can Harry's and Queen Mary---the Oasis is a classic piano bar featuring a large curving baby grand from which many a local crooner has tickled the ivories.

And although mindful of the Oasis' mainstay of regular and loyal patrons, there are a few opportunities to work with some of the programming that already exists, such as that on Monday and Tuesday evenings, which are traditionally slow in the bar trade.

For these nights Clay plans on working with a promoter "to see if I can draw a broader base of people in. I don't want to label it Black people, white people, young people, old people; I like to make it very general and broad-based."

And there will be a much heavier emphasis on promotion and publicity. Given Clay's savvy background in the entertainment world there shouldn't be much doubt that what he does do with the Oasis will add to the myriad of live entertainment opportunities in the Los Angeles area.

"They (Oasis patrons) can always look for what they expect to find there," he says of the ownership transfer. "But they can also expect to see some improvements for the greater good. The bottom line in this business is give the people what they want and they'll come back for more."

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And she couldn't agree more. Yet...she did truly enjoy her addiction to the candy store view of pretty young black men at bargain time when sophisticated soul sisters stripped of their ladyisms and armored with their charge cards and Trojans and Slauson Arms Motel room keys, pushed and shoved passed her to have at the dark, fresh and fleshy goods displayed before them. It was 1989."

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THE MILLENIUM MARCH ON WASHINGTON: KEEPING AIDS IN FOCUS

by Duane Cramer

Bayard Rustin warned us against "behaving as if the truth were not the truth."

But that's exactly what America's fad culture has done to us. And let's face it, America is famous for focusing on "fads."

The media hype the latest diets, the hottest stars, the newest movies, the most recent scandals. New fads are pre-sold, mass-sold and oversold. We're living in the sound byte era. As a result of 30 second commercials, the ability to instantly delete e-mail, cellular phones, pagers, faxes and a dizzying array of new technologies, we are bombarded with information. News and events have to be sensationalized to hold our attention. And that's sad, because one of the casualties has been attention to the ongoing AIDS crisis.

It's true: The focus on AIDS is waning. There is a new myth -- and it is a myth -- that says, "With all the new drugs and combination therapies, the AIDS epidemic is over."

Unfortunately, both outside and inside the gay community, too many people no longer take the AIDS crisis seriously. Yet, new communities are being infected at rapid and alarming rates, especially women, youth and people of color in North America and major population groups in Africa, Asia and South America.

As an African American, I'm particularly concerned about what's happening to people of color. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, African Americans now represent more than one-third of all reported cases of AIDS in the United States. African Americans account for over 43% of all new cases, though we comprise only 12% of the U.S. population. Latino populations account for 20% of new cases of HIV and AIDS and African American women represent 60% of all new cases among women. These statistics are staggering.

In spite of these realities, federal funding for resources in people of color communities is still scarce. I'm thankful for the commitment of the Black Congressional Caucus and encouraged by the recently initiated federal study of AIDS in communities of color. But this federal study is not unlike placing a Band-Aid on a massive gaping wound. As a result of pervasive and continued racism and homophobia, the growing HIV and AIDS epidemic in the African American and Latino communities is not given the attention nor the funding it would receive if the epidemic were still growing in the white community. Witness, for example, the financial condition of some of the largest and most established HIV and AIDS organizations.

AIDS is one of the worst mass plagues on a global scale in history. The millions of new HIV cases in Africa and Asia are leaving hundreds of thousands of children orphaned. In Africa alone, more than 35 million children have been orphaned by AIDS. The pervasive poverty that already exists in third world countries is exacerbated, and will be for decades, by this disease. Drugs are not available in too many places. And where they are available, they are often prohibitively expensive.

But in the United States, AIDS is no longer a 'sound byte'. Somewhere between the exciting debates over barebacking, public sex, queer politics, and a slew of "issues de jour," we have forgotten that this disease is not over. AIDS funding is dropping, our community has new interests, and we who have carried the scars of losing our loved ones, are left with an ache in the pit of our stomachs.

As a Black man living with HIV, I know all too well the need for increased awareness. This is one of the main reasons why I am on the Board of Directors for the Millennium March on Washington and serving as a Co-Chair of this 4th national GLBT March on Washington. The AIDS crisis is a federal issue. Health care should not be a luxury. Healthcare, for everyone, should be a right. When has it ever been in our best interest to be quiet?

Can our national politicians guarantee that no more cuts to AIDS funding and research will be made? Can they guarantee that women, youth and people of color will be given national priority? This issue is not just about Pride, this issue is about passion.

This is what I owe to my Brothers and Sisters, to my fellow people of color.

This is what I owe to everyone who has died of AIDS, and to those of us today who are living with HIV and AIDS.

This is what I owe to the children and the families and friends who are left with only their panels, and pictures, and memories of their loved ones.

And this is what I owe to my father, who died of AIDS. His spirit, passion and commitment will be with me at the Millennium March on Washington on April 30, 2000.

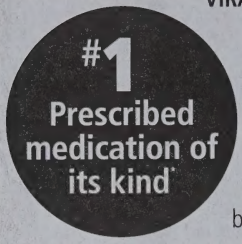
It's still true: Silence equals death. And activism equals life.

[Duane Cramer is a resident of San Francisco and an AIDS activist. He brings incredible passion and sensitivity to his HIV and AIDS work. His father, a professor at Howard University, died of AIDS-related complications in 1986. Duane, too, is HIV+.

Out of his commitment for HIV and AIDS awareness, Duane was awarded a social service leave-of-absence by his employer, Xerox Corporation, in 1998. He devoted this special leave to work with the AIDS Memorial Quilt and to HIV education among communities of color, especially African American and Latino school-aged youth.

During his leave of absence from Xerox, Duane met with school superintendents, administrators, school nurses and teachers across the United States and has spoken to high school groups of up to 1800 students.

He's a Board of Directors member of the Millennium March , and one of four national co-chairs of the event. He is also a Board Member of the San Francisco Community Center Project.]



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help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free **1-888-VIRACEPT** or visit **www.agouron.com**. (Refer to the important information on the next page.)

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For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:
- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

  Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

  This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:
- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

  These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

  If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:
- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Viramune® (nevirapine)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

  VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)

  The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

  The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight		Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
Kg	Lb			
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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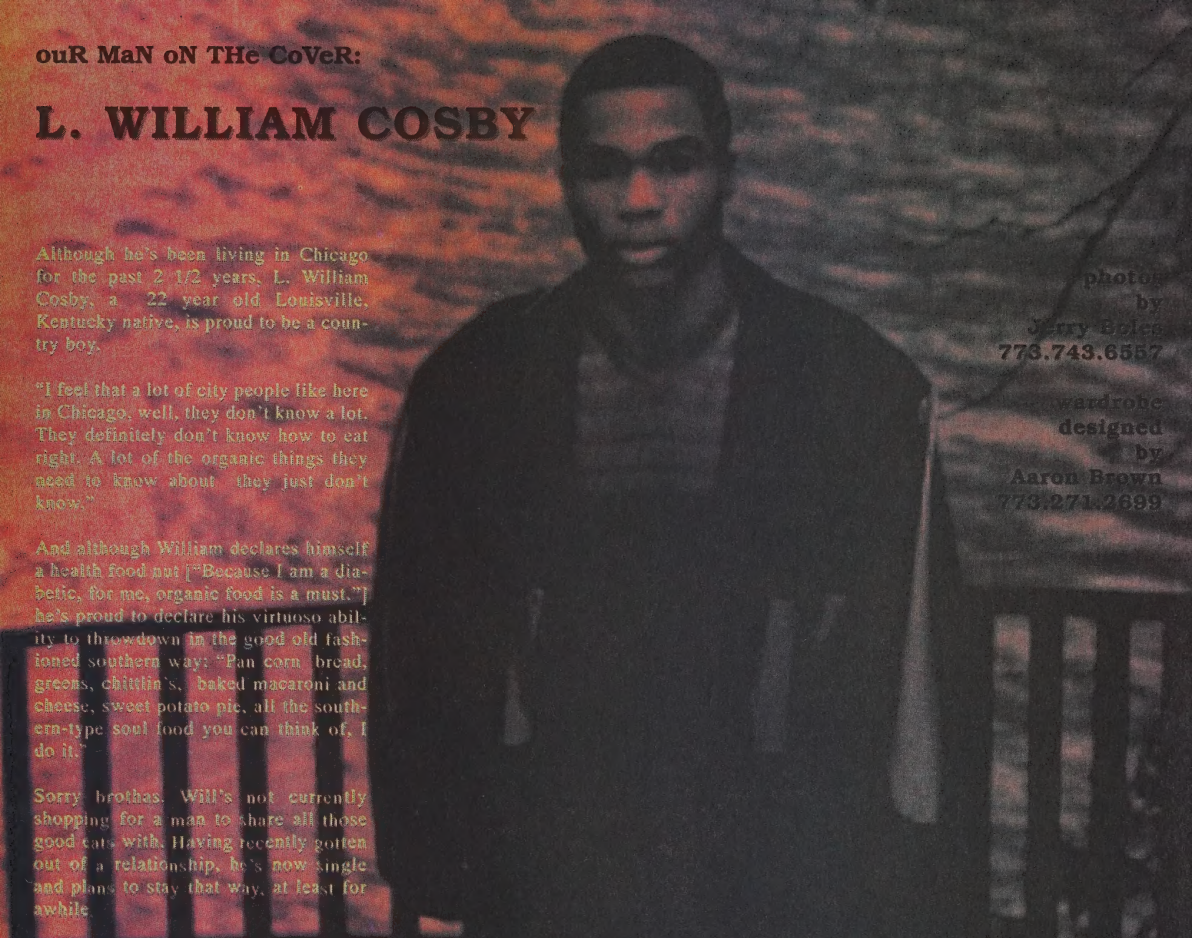
L. WILLIAM COSBY



photos by Jerry Boles 773.743.6557

wardrobe designed by Aaron Brown 773.271.2699

Although he's been living in Chicago for the past 2 1/2 years, L. William Cosby, a 22 year old Louisville, Kentucky native, is proud to be a country boy.

"I feel that a lot of city people like here in Chicago, well, they don't know a lot. They definitely don't know how to eat right. A lot of the organic things they need to know about they just don't know."

And although William declares himself a health food nut ["Because I am a diabetic, for me, organic food is a must."] he's proud to declare his virtuoso ability to throwdown in the good old fashioned southern way: "Pan corn bread, greens, chittlin's, baked macaroni and cheese, sweet potato pie, all the southern-type soul food you can think of, I do it."

Sorry brothas. Will's not currently shopping for a man to share all those good eats with. Having recently gotten out of a relationship, he's now single and plans to stay that way, at least for awhile.

"I don't know, maybe it's me. A love life is something that hasn't really worked for me lately," States the young man who knew he was homosexual at 4 and came out at 15. "I plan to be single for awhile and just concentrate on career. I mean, I date, but getting involved in a relationship is something I don't see right now. I want to get myself established financially."

But if and when he starts looking again, who would be his ideal man?: "Someone with common sense. I'm not too keen on looks, not like I used to be and I can't believe I'm saying this now (laugh), but, you know, someone I can relate to. Someone I can sit down with and have a conversation with day in and day out. Someone where we can enjoy each other's company. That would be fine.

"I would prefer someone close to my age but I also enjoy experience as well. The more experience a person has the more I tend to get closer to them.

"Someone that's serious about education, serious about working and maintaining a job and someone who has high goals. If you have all those things, man, looks are really not that important.

"The last person I dated was an average Joe, 24 years old, with an Associate degree. But there was nothing [physically] glamorous about him. Most guys think that if they date somebody they have to look like Tyson Beckford or some supermodel, but that's not true. This person I was with didn't treat me like a trophy. Most guys treat me like a trophy and that makes me feel bad, because it's like that's the only thing they're looking at---the outside---they're not really looking at the inside, how I think, how I talk, how I feel. They're just looking at how I look.

But his looks are indeed servicing the handsome 5' 9", 163 lbs. professional model who has appeared in numerous print ads throughout the country, yet it seems to not phase him as the self-confessed workaholic busies himself getting to know his new adoptive city while contemplating his future.

"Back in Louisville I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere, whether it was in the homosexual or heterosexual world. So leaving Louisville and coming to Chicago was like coming to a whole new playground.

"I like living in Chicago, though it has its ups and downs. I'm giving the city a chance and I'm giving myself a chance to get to know the city. I'm exploring the city a lot more: museums, etc."

And he's also following his own advice: "Stay focus and you'll succeed. And trust God."

ULOAH'S SISTAHFEST

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY & COMING HOME

written and photographed by Jennifer Glover

During the first weekend of October, I was one of hundreds of black lesbians who flocked to Camp Shalom high in the hills of Malibu, California for ULOAH's (United Lesbians of African Heritage) 9th annual SISTAHFest retreat. And what started out as a small gathering of 60 like-minded women back in October of 1991, has mushroomed into a serious, yet fun-filled spiritual and emotional feast nourishing the hunger of the African American Lesbian.

"ULOAH has taught me togetherness, acceptance, love, and most of all, sharing, stated one of the organization's board members, Erica. "I am much more independent, and I actually learned how to share! I use to be a selfish person. [But now] I love giving of myself and something positive to other women. I love bringing them great entertainment and SISTAHFest to the community."

Although Erica conceded that this year's turnout was smaller---last year's event was attended by 400 women---she was proud to announce that this year's entertainment was the "best we've ever had! It was excellent!"

On Friday night we watched filmmaker Sidra Smith's passionate and provocative movie, *A Luv Tale*, (personally, I can't wait for the sequal) and at the end, some of the cast members, Angela Means and Lana Moorer (better known as MC Lyte) came on stage. After introducing themselves they let us stampede them with questions and photos. Not only was the movie a great contribution to the retreat, but these sistahs gave of their time to come out, converse and interact with us.

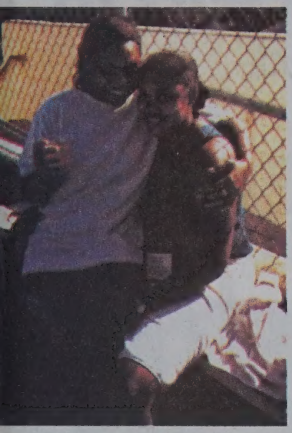
Saturday night was the SISTAHMoon Celebrity Showcase. Sharon Bridgforth, the acclaimed author of the *bull-jeans stories* (Redbone Press), read from her work profoundly, and it was deep-felt by all.

Comedienne Annie McKnight was a riot! She had us dying, especially with her impersonations, and Joi Cardwell performed from her CD *Deliverance*. Her sounds were smooth and mellow; pure music for the soul. Also, Medusa and Soinja Marie had us roaring! They were so extreme and full of uninhibited emotion. Their collective performance was extremely intense. Quite simply, the Celebrity Showcase was da bomb!

But even beyond the entertainment, SISTAHFest provided so much more. There were many informative, intriguing, and much-needed workshops on women's health issues.

"Women's health issues have been ignored," stated board member Kari, "especially black women's health. So little is known about our health. Heart disease, fibroids, and high blood pressure are problems that mainly affect Black women. We need to know the signs, symptoms, and symbols to look for."

Other workshops of interest that filled the weekend was one on Financial Freedom,



facilitated by D. Lisa Powell, which was very practical and beneficial. Amy Andre of *Good Vibrations* presented the provocative *Tip Toe Through The Two Lips* and *Feel Great About Sex* sessions. The first class discussed the female sexual organs, how they function and various ways of stimulation. The workshop also discussed which toys are best suited for you, how to care for them and, of course, masturbation. Yvette J. Freeman's discussion of Uterine Fibroids was very thought provoking.

There were also workshops on Creative Writing for the Soul, Yoga, Meditation, Understanding Astrology, Henna Mystique, SISTAHS in Recovery, and Intimate Partner Abuse.

"I have flown in from Detroit to attend SISTAHFest for the last 7 years" stated Dr. Kofi Adoma, Ph.D. "I haven't missed one yet! To me SISTAHFest is the "norm" for one weekend. [Here] I can embrace and be embraced by Black lesbians!"

I, personally, found ULOAH to be a dedicated organization geared to the needs of our community. What ULOAH is doing is wonderful. They are bringing women together on a regular basis to assist and support our physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

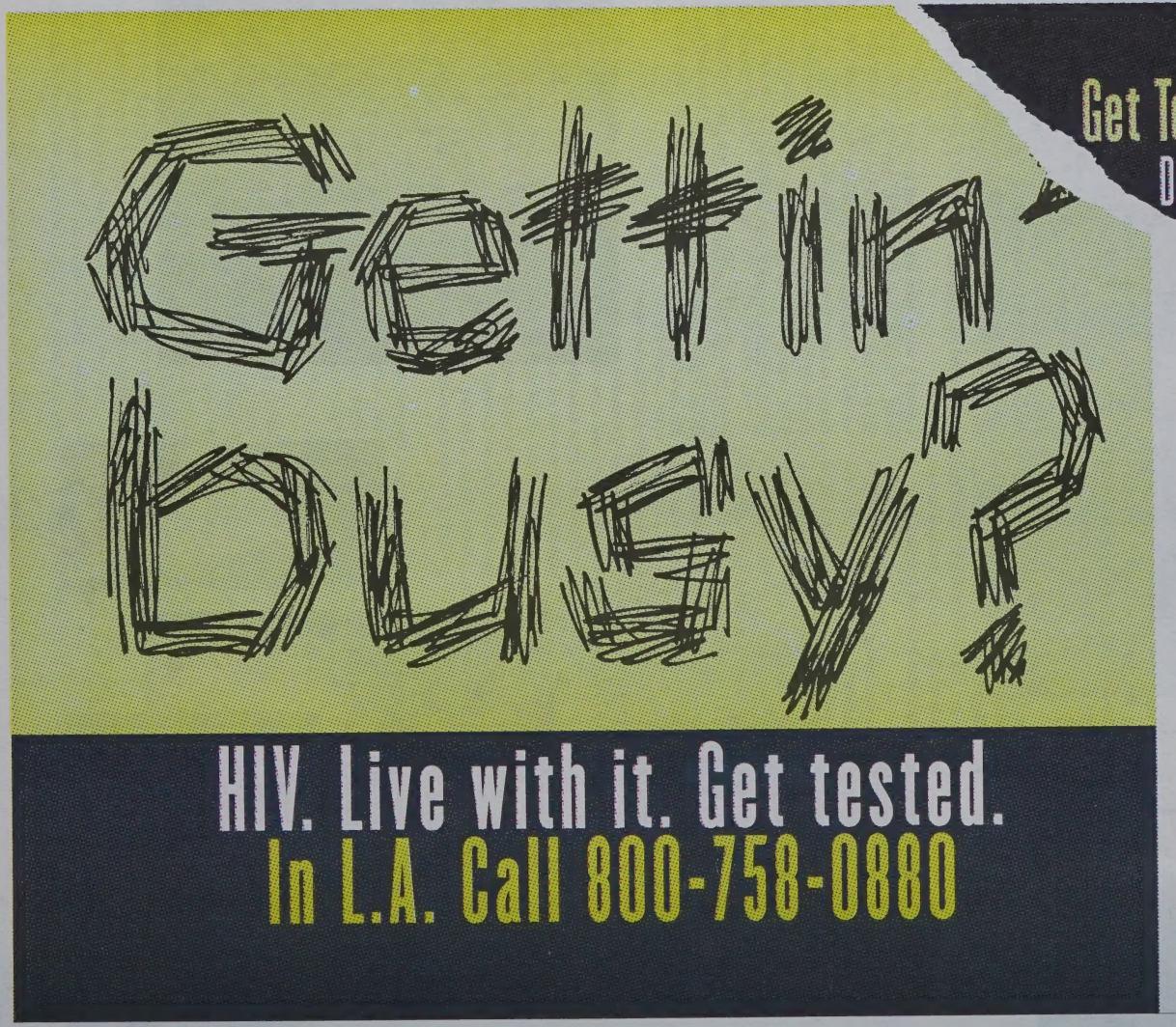
But ULOAH needs our support. A small amount of yourself will go a long way, whether it's volunteering your time or contributing financially. ULOAH needs your patronage.

I saw and felt unconditional love, understanding, fellowship, unity, and growth from most of the women. I observed deep-seated fears, anger, self-hate, judgment, abhorrence and envy from others. I wonder, with all that ULOAH gave that weekend, did the sistahs get it? Will they apply the knowledge from the workshops they attended? Will they apply the principles and teachings? Will they make them a part of their lives?

ULOAH has given us the opportunity to embrace the journey. We must go through something to get somewhere. ULOAH gave us a place. A safe space, our own sacred space where no one can hurt, judge, penalize us for our feeling, views, and ethics. A place called SISTAHFest.

I asked a sistah who traveled all the way from England what brought her to SISTAHFest. She cheerfully said that she wanted to be surrounded by her sistahs. She wanted to know them, She said she came in search of a gathering for women where there were no drugs or alcohol. She wanted to finally find acceptance and come home.

[ULOAH can be reached via e-mail at ULOAH@aol.com or on the ULOAHline: 323.960.5051]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To Your Health

BODY APPRECIATION DAY

by Steven G. Fullwood

Yesterday, I called my body up and apologized. "Look, I know I've been running you ragged lately, and not paying you very much attention. It's been non-stop working, writing, exercising, cleaning, traveling and shopping for the past few months, without a single moment of rest. Whaddaya say we get together and share some down time? Just you and me."

My body was suspicious. "No making me walk 30 blocks for CDs or starving me to death to write just one more page?" answered my body.

"I promise," I said, "so can you get up and take a shower? We stink."

"Okay."

And that's how "Body Appreciation Day" began. Well, sort of.

If you're anything like me, and I suspect you are because you are so fabulous, you don't have a lot of time to rest, relax and rejuvenate. Correction: you don't make time to rest, relax and rejuvenate. Most of us have to pass out from exhaustion before we consider taking a break. If we're lucky, a caring friend might pull us aside and whisper, "uh, your hair is falling out, the circles under your eyes have circles, and you have no fingernails. Take a vacation."

Wouldn't it be great not to have to get to that point? Well then here's your chance! Give yourself a "Body Appreciation Day!"

This is a day where you indulge in an array of activities that allow you repose and peace. You might consider taking a stroll through a park, getting a massage or manicure, or all three. Personally I love a good meal, so slowly savoring and consuming healthy food at my favorite restaurant is a prime activity. A full-body massage and relaxing in a sauna is also delightful. So when I sit down to create a day just for me, I take into account these and other restorative activities. Then I look in my wallet. Hmmm.

Relax. Treating yourself to a "Body Appreciation Day" doesn't have to clean out your wallet. With a little creativity, your day of fun and leisure can be very cost efficient.

So, where do you begin? A great place to start is to determine what day of the week would be ideal for you. Then decide what you want to do. What makes you happy? Write it down. Resolve to spend the entire day pampering yourself. And be realistic. While the thought of several semi-naked foot servants feeding you pealed grapes might be appealing, it may not be within reach.

Here are some helpful tips:

Plan in advance. This way you can schedule several activities and have time to shop around for the best deals. Look in your local newspapers, magazines and on the Internet for coupons and special rates for services. Always keep an eye out for a good deal.

Schedule activities early in the day. This is your day. Take full advantage of it.

Talk to friends and family. Don't overlook this potentially rich resource of information about activities you may be interested in!

Choose a variety of activities. And don't be afraid to try something new! Be adventurous!

Get up early on that special day. Light a candle and say a little prayer. This exercise opens up the soul and starts your day off right. After all, having a body to appreciate is a blessing.

Take a nice long bath or shower.

Enjoy a nice cup of herbal tea. Personally, I like Yogi Teas. The Yogi Tea Company manufactures delicious beverage teas and medicinal herbal teas known as Ancient Healing Formulas, all based on the Ayurvedic Tradition from India.

Arrive early for your appointments. Strolling in 10 or 15 minutes after your scheduled appointment isn't making the most of your time. Get there early, and bring along reading material to enjoy.

Purchase services early, if possible. If not, pinch a little here and there to ease the strain on your finances.

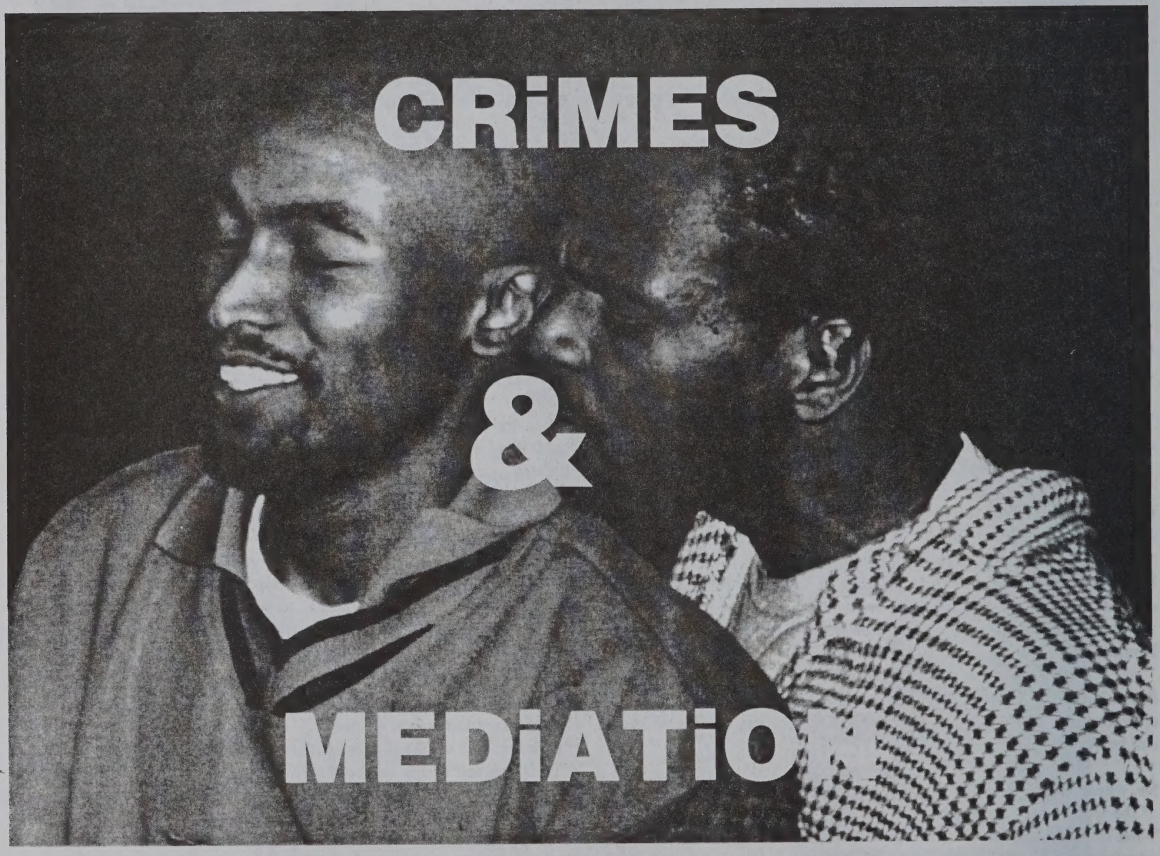
Relax and take a minute to breathe and reflect on the day's activities. The great thing about "Body Appreciation Day" is that you can always create the day you want! It can be simple or complex, cost-effective or a tad expensive (you deserve it!)

Here are some suggested activities:

*Get a nice, relaxing massage.
*Go to a park and study the beauty of nature.
*Take a nice leisurely swim.
*Purchase some nice flowers or a plant for your bedroom!
*Go sit by a large body of water and watch the waves go back and forth.
*Sit under a tree with a good book.
*Find a nice sauna or whirlpool.
*Pick up a pen or paintbrush and let the creative juices flow!
*Treat yourself to a movie or a play.
*Go sailing, roller blading or biking!
*Plan a picnic for one - or two!
*Plant a garden.

"Body Appreciation Day" can help you recognize your body as a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual expression of your life. When you feel out of balance and need a reprieve from life's everyday stresses, consider taking a day for yourself. After all, as I've said before, you deserve it!

If you need a little assistance planning a "Body Appreciation Day," please feel free to e-mail me at onestepfurther1@yahoo.com. I'd love to help you get started!



EXAMINING LOVE, MONEY & CO-DEPENDENCY

by Barry Simon

Leigh Mosely's photo of actors performing in Steve Langley's stageplay Gone Fishin'

'an was quiet and meticulous, living his life in utious measure. William lived on a grand ale, spending freely and moving unconscious- through a world of his own devising. Their urtship was a romantic's dream, the perfect raction of opposites. Except that Evan and illiam (not their real names) were not oppo- es. Rather, they were the disastrous coupling two people who were unfortunately "made r each other." The resulting mayhem was any- ng but romantic.

illiam was a thief and a liar, his anti-social havior dating back quite a few years. Nothing ajor, mind you. Mostly misdemeanors, start- g with schemes to wheedle money out of fam- ' members who knowingly participated. iat's called "enabling behavior."

ortly after he started dating Evan, William cessed his new lover's personal information iich gave him access to Evan's bank account.)wever, Evan discovered the crime almost mediately. Of course, he called the police and 'ormed the bank, right? And then he threw the m out. Well, that might be what the rest of us)uld have done (yes?), but Evan continued ting William. He did demand repayment, but ch time William failed to meet the deadline, 'an gave him another chance. That enable illiam to apologize profusely and, then, steal en more money behind Evan's back.

iere are people out there who need to be res- ed and there are people who need to be the scuer. Some people call this "love.")nsciously or unconsciously, the Williams and : Evans of the world know that the other will lfill their needs...kind of like a bee to pollen. iey complete each other. But the result is any- ng but sweet. So, Evan continued dating a an who had violated his trust, thereby giving illiam permission to continue doing to him iat he had done his whole life---stealing from)se who loved him.

ie violated bank account was just the begin- ig of an escalating array of fiscal crimes illiam perpetrated against his beloved. By the ne they reached the mediation table, William

d literally taken on Evan's financial identity, eating a long list of debts in his lover's name d destroying Evan's credit rating in the)cess. While Evan had recently awakened to the extent of his boyfriend's criminal invasion of his life, hearing it painstakingly cataloged during the mediation left him nearly speechless. William had broken so many laws that he could easily face jail time...if Evan turned him in.

Still hoping to salvage their relationship, William used a "love defense", confessing how Evan was the only person with whom he had ever been this honest and, thereby, proving his love. And despite his admittedly despicable actions, he knew that Evan still loved him. It was clear that William was completely blind to how his crime had betrayed his lover. Still unclear, however, was Evan's ability to move past his own need and truly see the man sitting opposite him.

"Evan," I asked, "do you have an idea of how much money William stole from you?"

"Yes," he replied, sounding uncertain.

"How much?"

"Between 9 and 10." We are talking about thousands of dollars here. Now you would think if someone stole thousands of dollars from your bank account and your credit card, you would be quite sure---to the penny---how much was taken. Was Evan's equivocation a sign that William's love defense was working?

"Well, how much is it?" I pushed.

"Between 9 and 10," he repeated.

"Well," I said again, my voice becoming more firm as I leaned closer to him, "which is it? 9 or 10?"

I was forcing him to go where he did not want to go---to the truth. Not the factual truth. That was clear enough. I'm referring to the emotional truth, those needs deep inside that caused him to enable William's crimes. Would he use the opportunity of the mediation to open his eyes, brush aside his false expectations of his swindler lover and finally see the truth of their relationship? Or would he continue to make excuses to himself, rationalizing his own and William's actions so that they might still have some kind of intimate relationship?

Evan looked at me as if I was asking him to place a gun next to a loved one's head and pull the trigger. William watched from the other side of the table, his big brown eyes begging forgiveness. With great reluctance Evan said, "10." I could almost hear his false expectations falling to the floor, shattering.

Together William and Evan constructed an agreement that was a day by day scenario listing the dates and times by which William would repay Evan the money he owed him while repairing the credit damage he had done. If William failed to meet any of the deadlines, Evan would not let him off the hook as he had done in the past. This time he would finally contact the authorities.

Evan went on to reveal how he had left a work situation where he was called upon to help others all day long. "It was too exhausting," he admitted, "and now here I am in this situation again." Maybe it was karma. Maybe he needed this lesson one more time so he could finally admit, "I am co-dependent." During the mediation he was brought face to face with his own truth and now was ready to never play the "enabler" role again. Hopefully, his next relationship would produce something sweeter.

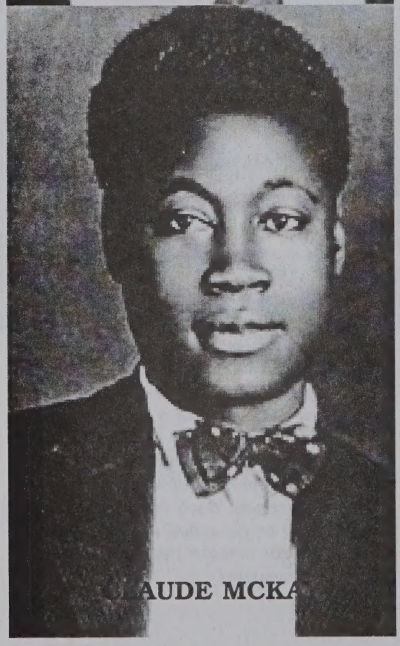
But beware. While Evan has recovered, William is still on the loose...along with the thousands of other Williams out there. They are looking for someone to rescue them, to "complete" the picture. If you think this is romantic, remember Evan and William. So-dependency isn't romantic. It sucks all the juice out of romance. In fact, it just sucks.

[Barry Simon is a private mediator in the Los Angeles area whose company is called Mediated Solutions. He is also on the panel of mediators for the Mosten Mediation Centers. He specializes in mediating relationship disputes for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities and encourages all couples to write a Living Together Agreement. He has created and conducted a workshop called "My Checkbook, My Lover, and Me" and has written a similarly titled booklet that helps couples begin the process of writing a Living Together Agreement. Barry can be reached at 818.752.8340 or via e-mail at sbarry@resolvenow.com. His website can be reached at www.resolvenow.com]

REVISITING THE RENAISSANCE: LITERARY FUEL FOR THE FUTURE

by Jason Michael

COUNTEE CULLEN



CLAUDE MCKA

When did it begin? How long did it last? And what did it really mean? You're bound to get a different answer from every individual you ask. Some have downplayed its significance through the years and dismissed it as a brisk period of breathless naivete that bound Black writers to an artistic standard managed by white publishers. Others laud the era as the birth of a new breed of black intellectualism that freed a generation.

Whether either definition is accurate there are at least a few facts that cannot be denied. It was the first time that Black intellectual thought, the stories, struggles and pains of a people, was packaged and distributed to a mass audience. White critics and consumers were not only hearing, but encouraging, if not exploiting, a new school of young, black writers.

What started as a debutante's ball of sorts, orchestrated by Alain Locke and designed to introduce such talented poets as Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes to a mainstream audience, resulted in the largest outpouring of black literary efforts to date. A waterfall of poetry, short stories, novels and plays poured forth and allowed a generation of Black voices to at last speak for themselves.

And what was downplayed, ignored and cleverly hidden in innuendo and subtle eroticism was the fact that a large number of these voices were gay. The fact that authors such as Cullen, Hughes, Claude McKay and Zora Neal Hurston actually had same sex affairs and can probably be best described as gay is not at all inconsequential when considering their writings. And often times their sexuality was there on the page inconspicuously illustrated for only the "trained" eye.

Like a coded bumper sticker, it only caught the attention of those who were looking for it. But it was there, in poems like "Heritage," "Tableau" and "For a Brown Boy" and in the heightened sensitivity of all the emotionally rich works they produced. The voices that were defining a generation, a generation coming of age in the 20th century, were homosexual. How remarkable!

Yet as every generation grows up an reaches middle age, their revolutionary ideals are outdated by new schools of thought. The poeticism of the Renaissance was rolled over by a new militancy fueled by the fiery battles of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Suddenly, the poems of a generation earlier seemed too quaint and cute for the current political climate.

But as the Civil Rights Movement was coming of age, there was another movement just being born. The Stonewall rebellion of 1969 spawned a new struggle for equality on the part of gays and lesbians. No longer was this group content to remain quiet behind closed doors and settle for the scraps of dignity afforded them. Encouraged and inspired by the crusade for civil rights, the gay rights movements was taking shape.

As it grew, so too did the number of voices willing to speak out about it. By the 80s there were already growing and vital gay and lesbian publishing houses. NAIAD and Alyson set the standards and by the end of the decade their success had proved to the mainstream publishing houses that there was a market for white gay literature.

Black, gay literature, however, was literally another story -- one that wasn't being told. A few anthologies eventually made it to the shelves and occasionally a novel by a Black, gay author would come along, but for many years such efforts were few and far between. Lesbian writers Audre Lorde and Pat Parker had passed on and minor movements in poetry and prose led by Assoto Saint and Essex Hemphill were abruptly halted by their AIDS related deaths in 94 and 95.

At the same time, however, something was stirring. It was a buzz created by a former computer salesman turned novelist named E. Lynn Harris. Initially self-published and sold out of his trunk, Harris' first novel, "Invisible Life,"

was picked up by publishing conglomerate Doubleday and released under their Anchor Books banner. Racking up numerous awards, and even an NAACP Image Award nomination, the book's success would serve as a sorely needed wake-up call to the publishing industry: "Guess what, folks! Black people read too, and especially Black, gay folks!

Soon after, Alyson Books released James Earl Hardy's "B-Boy Blues" to instant acclaim. Suddenly, there were two best-selling Africentric homosexual authors on the scene. The sequels to their debut novels dispelled any notions of the whole thing being just a fluke, and Harris and Hardy became legitimate literary stars. And then, from out of nowhere came the explosion.

Like a meteor shower raining down upon the earth, bookstores and shelves were flooded with a wealth of material written and published by Africentric homosexual writers, editors and intellectuals. There were more anthologies ("Shade" and "Go the Way Your Blood Beats"), poetry collections ("Last Rights" and Lyric: Poems Along Broken Road"), nonfiction ("One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America" and "The Truth That Never Hurts"), and a host of novels. And encouraged, at least in part, by Harris' self-publishing success story, an abundance of self-published authors and small publishing houses emerged (RedBone Press, Mirage Publishing, grapevinepress, Ishai Books and West Beach Books).

There was a real live movement forming and enough action taking place to cause Lisa C. Moore, founder of RedBone Press, to ponder in the pages of the Lambda Book Report whether a new renaissance was taking place. Author Alaric Blair ("The End of Innocence: A Journey Into the Life") believes this to be the case.

"In the past ten years more Black writers have published than in any time in literary history that I can recall," Blair said, stating that the relationship between this movement and the Harlem Renaissance is obvious. "The two movements birthed out of a need to express ourselves in artistic form."

Poet Marvin K. White thinks the modern Renaissance is just a continuum of the one started in Harlem. "It's a coming of age... The Harlem Renaissance was important because it documented what we knew up to that point and what our view of the word was from Harlem. [But] now, this movement is our view of the world today."

Still, G.B. Mann, author of "Low-Hanging Fruit," points out that there are distinct differences between the two movements. Today's black writers, for instance, are able to control the packaging and production of their works in ways that the Renaissance writers were not. Mann said that the success of this movement does not depend upon the praise of white critics.

"It is a renaissance which seeks not outside legitimization and acceptance but is a movement of affirmation in much the same way that the hip-hop community has created its own market and ethos," said Mann. "It is fueled by the ignorance of rich media and cultural institutions which have no clue about, interest in, or desire to affirm authentic expressions of who we are."

So it's almost like Harlem inside out, a grassroots effort invading an industry, instead of an industry capitalizing on a community. This movement isn't taking place merely in boardrooms of large publishing houses, but in the streets and clubs and coffeehouses of cities all across the country. And Detroit is very much among them.

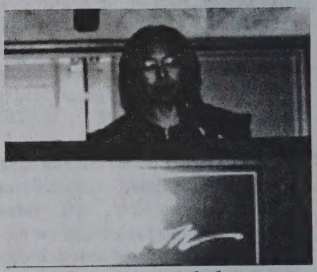
It should come as no surprise that creative energy is still bubbling over in Motown. Detroit Black Gay Pride President Johnny Jenkins knew there was still plenty of hidden talent to be mined here. Paralleling such groups as Speakfire in Atlanta and the Other Countries Collective in New York, Jenkins founded the In the Life Poetry Series four years ago.

Perhaps then, that is the key to this new renaissance and the relationship to it Harlem predecessor: they're both about community, about the telling of stories, the revelation of repressed truths and the sharing of passion and pain.

May those things never go out of style.

Alice Walker

on Audre Lorde, Labels and Bisexuality



Ms. Walker delivering key-note speech at 1997 NBLGLF Conference
photo by Ron Singleton

By Sidney Brinkley

Award winning novelist Alice Walker delivered the keynote address at the 1997 Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum's 10th Annual Conference in Long Beach, California. I was assigned to cover the conference for "The Washington Blade," D.C.'s gay newspaper. When I sent Walker the request for a n interview I sent along a copy of an 1984 interview that Audre Lorde had conducted for "Blacklight," the Black gay magazine I edited. At that time Alice Walker had just become famous and her picture appeared on the cover of the "New York Times Book Review." However, there was talk going around that Walker was a lesbian but when asked she always denied it.

In her "Blacklight" interview, which was conducted by writer Joseph Beam, Audre had said she was happy for Walker's success but she felt her insistence that she was not a lesbian had been "a real factor in her acceptability." In the context in which the remark was said, Audre came off a little peeved at Walker and a little envious of her success.

For years I had wondered how Alice Walker would respond to that rather unflattering comment, never dreaming I would actually get the opportunity to ask her. However, to my surprise, she graciously agreed to the interview and, of course, I asked her about Audre's comment.

"I thought it was the most strange thing I ever read," she replied. "It was one of those double things. She said she wished it was her but if it couldn't be her 'I was glad it was Alice,' on the other hand. Audre and I had to work some things through. She didn't like the fact that I called myself 'womanist.' She thought I was trying to get away from being a Black feminist." Though I had been forewarned that she could be cool and distant, Alice Walker was very charming the evening I met her and she forthrightly answered every question I put to her. She was in a hotel suite, sitting on a sofa next to poet/author/activist June Jordan, who never said a word.

There were perhaps a dozen people in the room at the time but I was totally unaware of their presence because I was focused on her and she was looking at me very intently. It was only afterwards that I would become somewhat overwhelmed by the experience.

By the time we met, Alice Walker had already "come out," and I asked at what point did she realize she was Bisexual? She answered she did not like the labels of "Lesbian," "Gay," or even "Bisexual," because she found them limiting.

"I always felt that if I loved someone, I could make love to that person," she said. "I've always found it difficult to 'fix' myself with a word or label. It would limit my freedom. And to me, freedom is the most important thing. Freedom is the most sensual thing."

Walker said she had come out to her family as soon as she realized her attraction to other women.

"I feel very strongly that as soon as you find something new and wonderful about yourself, you should just tell your people," she said. "My favorite brother died recently. He was very much the 'Archie Bunker' type. I have a lot of brothers and they're all rednecks and it was such a delight to tell him that I had fallen in love with a woman and to watch him kind of...pause. He started to smile because he didn't 'get it.' His brain didn't catch up to what I had just said and that smile dropped and he just sat there for a few minutes.

"But he loved me. He loved me silly from the time I was born. So, what was he gonna do? To the people that we love, I think the greatest gift we can give is to be who we are, as we find out who we are, right or wrong. That is the greatest gift.

"That was my moment of what it would be like to be face-to-face with the person I most care about. Actually, you don't care what most people think about you. But my brother...I loved him and what was he going to say? I wanted him to still love me."

In her speech the following day she again referred to her dislike of labels as she spoke of the "Decolonization of the Spirit." "What does Decolonization of the Spirit mean to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or two-spirited people? It means we begin to realize we must surrender our autonomy to no one. Though we might exist in loving solidarity with others, in fact, we have a one-on-one relationship with life. We learn that labels can be boxes that eventually cramp both the body and the soul. We begin to think, feel and comprehend the way we did before colonization forced us away from common sense. We know in our hearts that if we liberate our spirits, our sexuality, like our love itself, will follow with joy."

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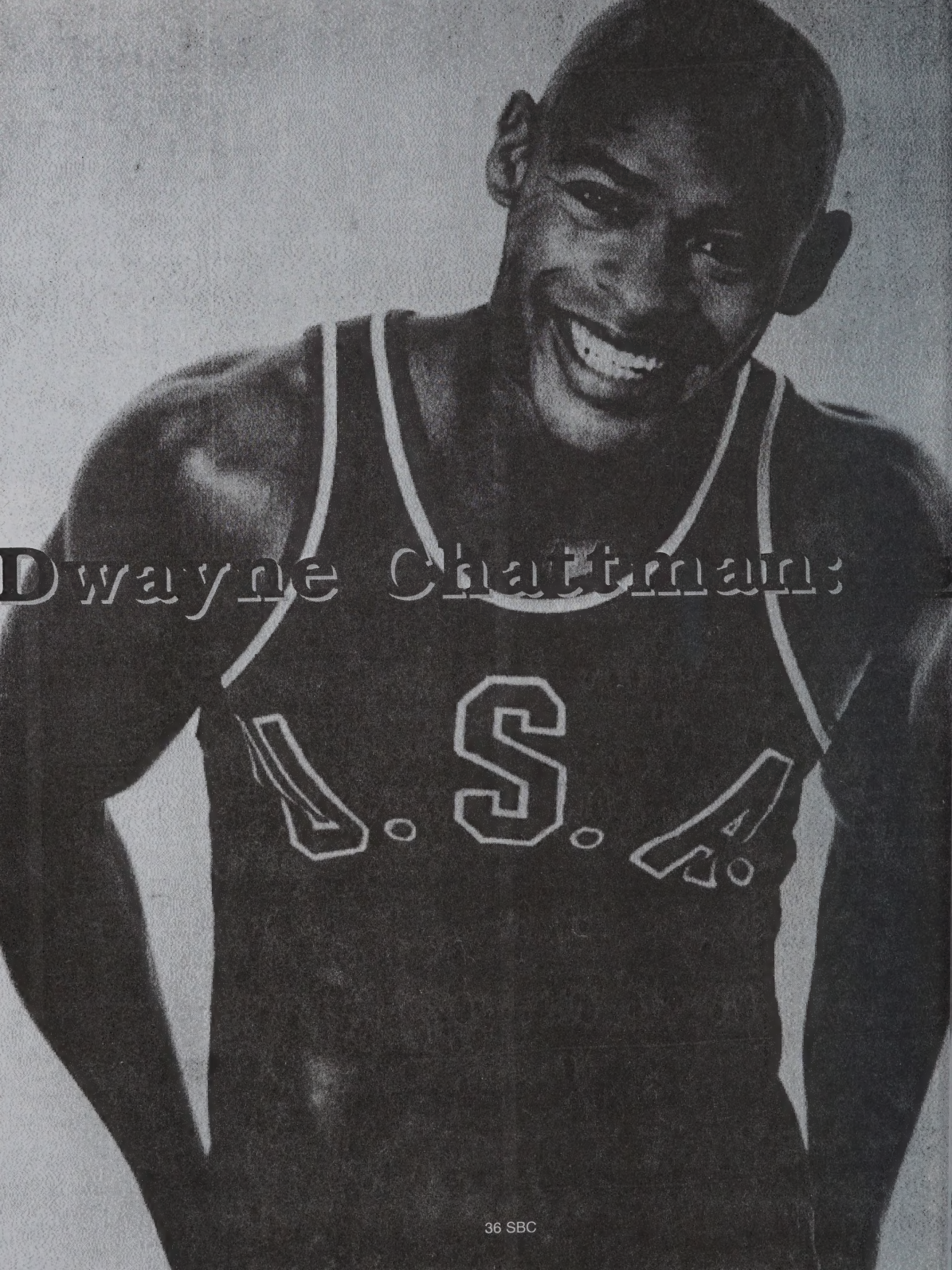
Dwayne Chattman:
U.S.A.

ng FAME to pick and choose

by Stanley Bennett Clay

I finally caught up with Ohio born actor/singer/dancer Dwayne Chattman over the phone in his New York hotel room early one morning. It had been a grueling but invigorating experience for the young, triple-threat thesp who has the awesome responsibility and talent-engendered privilege to resurrect bad-boy Leroy Johnson---renamed Tyrone Jackson---in the touring stage version of the classic film musical *Fame*.

Although he graciously denied that I woke him up, the sleep in his voice---or maybe the rigors of last night's stage performance---were evident.

"We're suppose to be playing "Rent" today," he laughed with a drowsy hoarseness that could not detach itself from it's dripping sexuality. His warm manner and easy demeanor had not changed one bit

over the years since we used to run into each other at the clubs here in L.A. or at inside industry parties and receptions where actors, producers, writers and directors let their hair down, knowing that the often indiscreet press was not on the guest list. Our relationship was one of distant regard and respect, kind words and mentions related through mutual friends.

A conversation with this graduate of the famed Goodman School of Drama in Chicago is a conversation with an artist that is driven. Knowing that competition is as important to the actor as it is to the athlete, it was of no surprise that the cast of *Fame* and the cast of *Rent*, the other big Broadway heavily-'colored' musical, would be duking it out on the softball field later that afternoon. Dwayne's biggest regret was that he would not be on the field, but in the bleachers, thanks to a strained muscle brought on by one of the gymnast-type leaps employed in the choreography of the show he now headlines.

Dwayne has come a long way from dancing in the background of the TV show *Fame* and now starring in 40-plus city tour of the stage version. In between came jobs in such stage hits as *A Chorus Line* and *The Wiz*, as well as featured roles in such films as *Virtuosity* opposite Denzel Washington.

Here's a brother with a master plan. Work your ass off now. Pick and choose later. Works for me.

SBC: What's the hardest thing about being on tour?

Dwayne: Trying to stay healthy. Going from city to city. Trying to keep your body together because you know I like to work out and stuff and it's very difficult. We're doing more than 40 cities. But I really want to get back to L.A. A lot of casting people and a lot of directors want to see me. And it would be cool to get back on television, but, like we talked about last time, they're really shady with a lot of the roles now. They're not letting a lot of young Black people get these roles now. So, I had to figure out how to work because they weren't letting anybody in except for the rappers and the comedians. A lot of the young actors weren't working.

SBC: So if you had your choice would you be doing film or television?

Dwayne: Probably film, but you know, God works in mysterious ways. I mean, I can still dance, but I'm not going to be able to do that forever, so it's cool that I'm able to utilize it now.

SBC: Having gone from being one of the background players in the TV series *Fame* to being in the lead role; that has to be some-

what of a head-spinner for you.

Dwayne: I'm always studying the acting, but when I first moved to California, dancing was the only way for me to get income. I started off doing a lot of dancing---videos and television shows. And then I went on to acting and other things like musicals.

SBC: What would you say distinguishes your performance from that of Gene Anthony Ray, who created the role of Leroy in the film?

Dwayne: Wow. The character is somewhat the same, but I've added a lot more dimension to the character. He's a lot more sensitive. Now, of course, I liked what Gene Anthony Ray did, but

in the stage show the singing is more vocally challenging and the dancing is more athletic.

SBC: I remember you used to do some modeling. Are you still into that?

Dwayne: Every now and then. Hey, I do everything in this business. If it pays the bills I do it. Remember *L.A. Style Magazine*?

SBC: Right, right.

Dwayne: That's when I started doing print things. I've been at this show-biz thing since I was 12 years old; a long time.

SBC: Hey, I know you're not going to tell me your real age. I haven't run into an actor yet who'll do that. But you've been out there for at least ten years.

Dwayne: (laughing) Probably a whole lot longer than that.

SBC: Homosexuality is very prevalent in the world of entertainment. What do you think is happening in regards to acceptance?

Dwayne: You know they don't accept it. I think it's more accepted in the white community. It ruins a lot of Black people's careers.

SBC: You think, still?

Dwayne: Oh yeah. Yeah. Not a lot of white people like Ellen or Elton John. It's okay for them.

SBC: Do you think that that's what hurt Gene Anthony Ray's career?

Dwayne: Partly. And then, in this business, you have to be nice. You can't be nasty to people. I mean, you never know who you're talking to. You gotta be humble. People look at all that.

SBC: Now when you look at someone like George C. Wolfe, arguably the most powerful individual in American Theatre right now as the Artistic Director of *The New York Shakespeare Festival* and *The Public Theatre*, and very proudly open as an African American homosexual, also you look at someone like Paris Barclay, Executive Producer of *NYPD Blue* and Emmy Award-winning television director, another brother who is fiercely open about his homosexuality, and in several magazine and newspaper articles, even as a cover story in SBC, he talks about the power of his same gender loving pride and freedom within the construct of Hollywood---in light of this and the fact that the motion picture and television industry, not to mention live theatrical, is run by homosexuals.

Dwayne: White, gay, Jewish homosexuals. Still, a lot of people's careers are ruined---Black people. I know tons of people in the industry who just won't come out. It's sad, because we're all God's children and it shouldn't matter if you're gay, Black or white, it shouldn't matter. It doesn't matter. I think it's so stupid. I mean, why do people care how Whitney Houston is? I just wanna hear her sing. They're so bad with that and it really bothers me.

SBC: So are you saying that there's a need to have a certain guardedness?

Dwayne: You have to. It's unfortunate, but what can you do?

SBC: What do you see in the future in regards to a person in this industry being able to be him or herself?

Dwayne: I see it around the corner. People are becoming more open, but it's not changing fast enough. It's just like racism. They say 'Oh, there's a change!' You see a little change, but not much.

SBC: What kind of effect does being on tour have on your romantic life?

Dwayne: My state of mind right now is all about the business and making it happen; getting to that next level. The other thing will always be there. And I'm a loner anyway, so it's okay.

SBC: What is the next level for you?

Dwayne: Being able to pick from any vehicle---Broadway, television, film---is what I want. I want to be able to pick and choose. That's the level I want to get at. That's very important for me. I think if you work hard enough then you can get it. I've been able to do things in the past that I didn't think I'd be able to do, but if you work hard enough and concentrate and start putting yourself first, it's a lot easier to get there. You have to be selfish to a certain extent, know what I'm saying? I'm only speaking from personal experience. I don't know if that's the way to do it for everybody. It's what works for me. And be nice. You have to be nice to people. You can't be an ass. It's so important. Reputation is so important. That's what Lena Horne said: 'You have to be nice, you can't be nasty.'

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There are those of us who record
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Who have by strange turns touched our lives.
Physically, we do not move of our own volition;
There are ropes tethered to us.
Which are tied to the greater cycle of things.
The coming, goings and returnings.
Thoughts transport us metaphysically among experiences
Such that we have seen the sun from the moon
And have lain dead in our master's trammels,
Though we have not moved from this place.
We are open as a window
To receive the breeze, smell the aroma
Of those worlds around and inside us.
Like huts built of granite, we persist
Though the village that was dies
As we watch and transcribe.
Our eyes view beyond their vision:
They absorb, taste blood
They scream when our sister's are dreaming.
We have souls that remember,
Skin that recalls,
Voices that sing across the aegis of lives
So that in the end
God will remember
How we
Happened.

In Paperback October 1999

Low-Hanging Fruit
G. B. Mann
ISBN: 0-9655117-0-7
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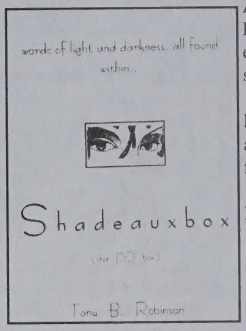
BooK ReVieWS

SHADEAUXBOX by Tony B. Robinson
Shadeauxworks
P.O. Box 3192
Durham NC 27715-3192
Reviewed by Stanley Bennett Clay



A fresh talent enters the scene with a bold cool in the embodiment of Tony B. Robinson. Deceptive simplicity is part of the adept art expressed in this brother's poetic raps that ripple with the ring of whispers and smoke rings and slow acoustic jazz in a basement beat joint.

His poems are, for the most part, same gender loving relationship oriented, and he deals with the age old ups and downs with pragmatic maturity---no flowery sonnets up in here---and an uncruel cut-the-crap efficiency.

In *closing curtain*, he states, almost a-matter-of-factly:

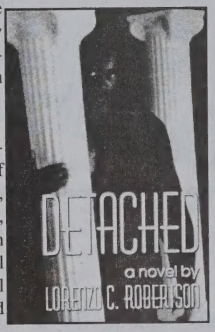
No words part our lips
So it has come to this
In the words of local informants
We gave quite a performance
Awards worthy of all

Even in self-examination Robinson maintains a clear-headed healthiness. Notice *kinetic:*

change is good every now and then
cleans the slate for new game, so i think i'll let it in
and begin where the common
seems to have brought about my end
it's inevitable i'll rouse a few heads
as i walk on water across the Pacific
but it's not so simplistic to tally the consequence
how many times that voice mars my confidence
i abide by the heart so i speak in my defense

Robinson tries unconvincingly a little blues cryin' *with get me down*, but cryin' the blues just ain't his thing. His poetry walks through the storm with it's head held high and a cool-ass strut in it's step. Quite simply, Tony B. Robinson's poetry soars. And this small collection---30 pages---is a winner.

DETACHED by Lorenzo C. Robertson
(Ishai Books
709 East Caracas Street
Tampa FL 33603-2328
$14)
Reviewed by Richard C. Jones



Have you ever thought you knew someone who exuded sexuality, confidence, stability and success? Have you taken an introspective look at yourself and didn't like what you saw?

If you answered no to both of these questions, then you need to pick up a copy of Lorenzo C. Robertson's debut novel, *Detached*. Set in the summer of 1988, Robertson creates a sexy graphic depiction of one man's descent into his own sexual abuse and cocaine abyss, and his eventual ascension from the depths of depression and loneliness in his main character, Jon Knight.

At one point or another, we have all done something in excess to overcompensate for what we lack in our lives. *Detached* forces readers to peel away the layers we attempt to mask with those excesses.

As he introduces other characters in this retro chronicle, readers are sure to recognize themselves or others in this saga of a decade gone by.

Whether we like it or not, Robertson forces us to take an up close and personal look at what we all want in our lives and the sometimes dangerous detours we take to claim it. *Detached* is a painful, revealing and realistic look at all that glitters, that isn't gold! And it serves to remind us, although at times we stumble, to pick ourselves up and continue toward the light, the truth about who we are, enriching ourselves as we continue the journey.

THE BEST MAN by Dwayne Carter
(Ishai Books
709 East Caracas Street
Tampa FL 33603-2328
$14)
Reviewed by Richard C. Jones

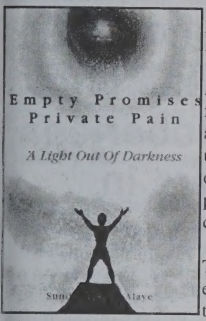
Imagine Guess Who's Coming to Dinner with a same gender-loving relationship and a best friendship as an appetizer, And what do you get, complications aplenty in Dwayne Carter's first effort, *The Best Man.*

The Atlanta native spins a tale centering around Rick Stanley and his partner Rashaan and the impending visit from Rick's best friend, Tony. Carter weaves an intricate story that begins to unravel when Rick doesn't tell Tony that he and Rashaan are more than "just roommates." Readers will turn pages trying to keep up with Rick's deceit and deception , wondering how long this charade can continue. Readers will also take bets out on how long Rashaan will withhold his 'good lovin' from his partner.

The Best Man explores the truth about ourselves that we sometimes refuse to reveal to those who are especially close to us. Carter's twists and turns make for an enjoyable read reminding us that the truth will set you free.

EMPTY PROMISES PRIVATE PAIN - A LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS
by Sundiata Najja Alaye'
(Moyo Press
621 Cabot Court Suite 201
Memphis, TN 38103
$15.95)
Reviewed by Stanley Bennett Clay

There is much to be admired in this informative but somewhat presumptuous self-help book by D.C.-based lecturer Sundiata Najja Alaye'. It addresses many of the questions that many of us as Black homosexual and bisexual men have, consciously or unconsciously, asked ourselves: What if my family finds out? Why is this lifestyle so complicated? Where is Mr. Right if there is a Mr. Right? Why are brothers so sexual? Why can't I be happy with one person, or myself? I've lost too many friends to AIDS! What do I do If I am HIV positive? How am I supposed to live with AIDS?



Alaye' is generous with the details of his own failed relationship and ultimate fall into a negative state, and though he has survived to document his resurrection from a spiritual demise, the baggage clings tightly to his new philosophies, often resorting to advise that can do more harm than good.

Though he claims not to be a prude, that is exactly what he is as he suggests, no demands, that loveless sex is bad, your ego is your enemy (p.165) and the answers to all of our problems----he has determined that all of us are in one way or another fucked up---can only be found in the dogma of Western Christian religion.

Most disturbing is Alaye's belief that unconditional love and support of one's partner includes aiding and abetting his life of lies when it comes to family and friends. Alaye' states: "Accepting people as they are brings us peace. So if that means that you have to "dehomonize" the house (moving into the guest room, hiding pictures, photo albums, magazines, and videos) as many of us do when family or friends visit, do it! Brotha Alaye', if that's how you want to live your life, if that's how you live your life, then God bless you, but to encourage this kind of self-hating, self-loathing behavior in the name of self-help is down right irresponsible.

I wanted so much to love this book as our community needs words of healing, of rejuvenation; affirming words, even words of painful constructive criticism, words of good hard love---and there are some truly informative and helpful moments within these pages (Exercise 12---Exit With Love, offers helpful and positive instructions on healing after a relationship has ended), but *Empty Promises Private Pain* contains an overwhelming amount of chaff that tends to choke the wheat at the very roots.

Example: Alaye's reason for suggesting we wait 90 days before having sex with a person we're getting to know has something to do with comparing the experience to a 90 day probation period on a new job. This rather ludicrous advise, like so much advise related to sex in this book, hints at what I suspect is a disdain of a beautiful gift a Greater Power has given man, animal and plant life. The gift of sex in all its varying expressions.

Sundiata Alaye' says it's time for a healing, and yes indeed it is, but I always thought healing came from self-loving, self nurturing, and self-care, not, as this book inadvertently suggests, from self-denial and self-flagellation.

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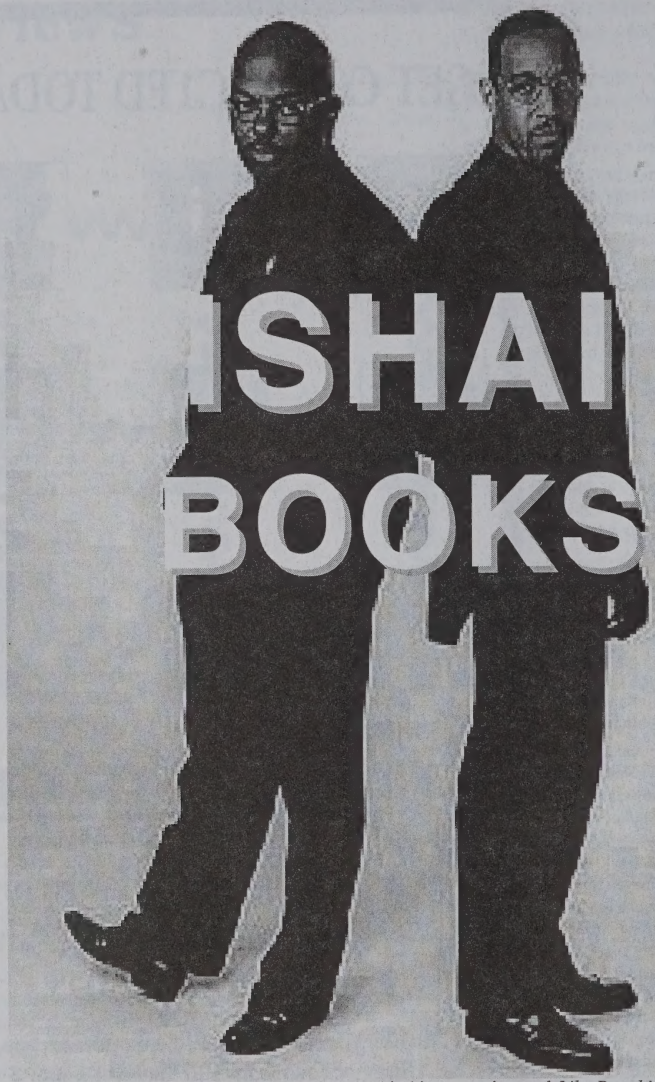

Publishers Ricc Rollins and Lorenzo Robertson Partners in Business Partners in Love

by Richard C. Jones

What do you get when you mix business with pleasure? A business that is built on and strengthened by the love of it's two owners Ricc Rollins and Lorenzo C. Robertson, authors and proprietors of Ishai Books, a Tampa, Florida-based publishing house .

Ricc, author of the novel *Like Breathing,* is an award-winning talk show host, ordained minister and former columnist for the Tampa Tribune. Lorenzo, from the small town of Statesboro, Georgia, was a radio announcer, public director, case manager and vocational counselor for a number of years before turning his efforts to the written word. His poetry first appeared in his partner's novel *Like Breathing*. He is the author of his novel, *Detached.* Recently, I sat down with the literary duo to talk with them about being partners both in life and business.

Richard: After nearly three years of romantic involvement and being entrepreneurs, how has being so intricately linked affected your personal and professional relationships?

Ricc: I think that it has brought us closer together. It's not bad or good, it just is. We are a team and (even if, God forbid) we broke up tomorrow, I know that we would still be great friends.

Lorenzo: I think that it has actually enhanced and strengthened the bond in everything thing that we do and are. It's not about him or me, it's about us.

Richard: Being business and romantic partners, what are some of the best and worst qualities you two have brought out in one another

Ricc: We both have stirred up the creative and adventurous side in each other. We're willing to take risks on projects and having someone that believes in and supports me gives me extra

motivation to try if nothing else.

Lorenzo: Ditto.

Richard: As authors, has you partnership spilled over into your books?

Ricc: I think so, there are some moments of our lives that I put in *Like Breathing,* partially because I thought it worked but to also chronicle the relationship that I have with Lorenzo.

Lorenzo: Same here, Ian & Jon's (two of the characters in *Detached*) relationship is somewhat reminiscent of us.

Richard: What is the one item that you have received from each other that you treasure the most and why?

Ricc: A pocket watch on our first year anniversary, it was a total surprise and I cherish it because it came from him. But he's also given me the strength to be me and love me unconditionally, that's the greatest gift.

Lorenzo: A camera for my birthday that we spent together as a couple, I mentioned in passing months before and there it was. He uses it more than I do, but then again he's becoming quite the photographer.

Richard: Of the two of you, who is more home shopping and who is more home improvement?

Ricc: I'm both...

Lorenzo: I'm neither, but will step up to the challenge.

Richard:Who is the more apt to give in or stand you your ground in an argument?

Ricc: I think that it's more seventy percent me and thirty percent him.

Lorenzo: Nope, it's fifty fifty.

Richard: Do you have pet names for each other?

Ricc: No, Lorenzo doesn't like pet names, occasionally I call him "Z" but no one else calls him that (except for my mother), he's not into nick names.

Lorenzo: He's Ricc and that's what I call him (except for the occasional baby or
honey).

Richard: How do you want to spend New Year's Eve 1999?

Ricc: In church, with here at my home church or at Trinity United Church in Chicago with my mentor and favorite pastor, Dr. Jeremiah Wright, the man is a preacher's preacher.

Lorenzo: I want to be at some awesome party in Manhattan with all sorts of happenings going on.

Richard: Finish this sentence, Nobody knows that I...

Ricc: Collect Black Barbie Dolls and Annie Lee Collectables.

Lorenzo: I use to Eskimo Kiss (rubbing noses) but then again I haven't done that since fourth grade.

Richard: Was it love at first sight?

Ricc: For me it was love at first sight, a mutual friend introduced me to this cute guy wearing braces and I knew from the moment we spoke that I wanted to be with him for the rest of my life.

Lorenzo: We were like Dharma and Greg. We didn't date, we just jumped into a relationship.

Richard: What gets on your nerves about one another?

Ricc: He's very analytical about everything, there always has to be a reason why... it can never just be.

Lorenzo: Exactly, his not excepting that there is cause and effect.

Richard: What prompted to write your respective novels?

Ricc: (I've told this story before) There was a guy in our BrothasSpeak meeting that made a comment that he would never love himself as long as he was gay and knew that no one else would love him either. And I wanted him (and others like him) to know and honor their truths and be without all the drama.

Lorenzo: *Detached* was something that I always want to write, my characters weren't idealistic. They are people with vices and flaws, everyday folks.

Richard: Who inspired you to write?

Ricc: E. Lynn Harris. when I met Lynn in '94, I shared with him that I wanted to write and he told me to"just do it." It was several years later, but I did write the books and I know that if he (along with James Earl Hardy and the countless others) hadn't paved the way, I wouldn't be here to day. So I thank them publicly.

Lorenzo: And Ricc inspired me by "just doing it!"

Richard: What is something that surprised you about each other?

Ricc: He's an avid country music fan.

Lorenzo: His personality changes drastically when he becomes agitated. Talk about mood swings (laughing).

Richard: If you could spend one day as your partner, what three things would you make sure to do that day?

Ricc: That's a very good question, but I wouldn't want to be him, I like being
me.

Lorenzo: Same here , I agree wholeheartedly.

Richard: Who is more apt to go with the flow or plan?

Ricc: I live to plan, I like structure

Lorenzo: And I go with the flow.

Richard: What advice would you give couples thinking that who want to go into business together?

Ricc: Be willing to make a commitment to the vision, communicate and be
prepared to sacrifice.

Lorenzo: Make sure that its a common goal and not one vision over the other. Richard: How will readers find out about what Ishai Books has in store for Fall?

Ricc: They can always visit our website at www.ishaibooks.com.

Lorenzo: And, checking out their local bookstores and emailing us at IshaiBooks@aol.com

Richard: What projects are you currently working on?

Ricc: Well, the sequel to *Like Breathing*, Breathe Again is due out October '99 and...

Lorenzo: I have my first book of poetry, eclectic essence coming out as a part of our fall book list.

Richard: What else is on the list?

Ricc: We have three new novelist debuting, *The Men's Room* by Michangelo Scruggs, *When the Children Get Together* by R. Bryant Smith and *Discretion* by Sharon Patton.

Lorenzo: And *The Best Man* by Dwayne Carter is still delighting readers around the country. So there's plenty to read.

GAYE ADEGBALOLA and her BITTER SWEET BLUES

by Marc Lipkin photo by Marc Norberg

Singer/songwriter/vocalist/guitarist Gaye Adegbalola's musical roots run deep. As a founding (and current) member of *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women*, Gaye not only rediscovered the blues she first met as a child, she put her stamp on them, helping grow Saffire from local sensation to international phenomenon. Now with her first solo album, *Bitter Sweet Blues*, Gaye Adegbalola reaches deep onto her past and creates a musical statement for today and for the future.

Produced by blueswoman Rory Block (who also adds her intense slide guitar and background vocals on half of the albums tracks), *Bitter Sweet Blues* features eight Gaye originals ranging from haunting to joyful, plus songs by Keb' Mo', Smokey Robinson , Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey and Gaye's primary inspiration, Nina Simone.

The roots of Gaye's blues background were planted the day she was born in the small, segregated town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1944. Her parents, both community leaders, also held a deep love of music. Her father, a part-time jazz musician, was the first Black school board member in Fredericksburg. Her mother always brought home the old records when the jukebox was changed at the Youth Canteen where she worked. Gaye played flute in her high school band and was chosen for the all-state band three separate years. After her first job (sorting dirty laundry for forty-five cents an hour), Gaye's interest in the burgeoning civil rights movement began. She participated in many sit-ins and pickets during the 1960s after graduating from high school as valedictorian in 1961. During her teen years and throughout college, Gaye listened to music and danced every chance she had. "I would dance all night long to Chuck Berry, James Brown, Etta James, Ray Charles, The Shirelles, Ruth Brown, Ike and Tina Turner," she recalls, "These artists shaped my musical taste." As she got older, she developed a love of gospel and then jazz and eventually found Nina Simone. "Nina led me to Bessie Smith.And I've never turned back. The blues roots of jazz became very clear to me."

While at college in New England, Gaye first learned a few chords on a guitar she bought from her roommate. Moving to New York, she became militant and changed her name to Adegbalola, a Nigerian name meaning "I'm reclaiming my royalty." She participated in a political determination organization in Harlem in 1966 and became active in the Black Power movement, leading protests and singing political songs.

After returning to Fredericksburg in 1970, Gaye was a director of the theater group Harambee 360 Degrees and often acted in the productions. She worked as a biochemical researcher and bacteriologist before teaching 8th grade science from 1971 through 1987, and was honored as Virginia State Teacher of the Year in 1982. In 1984, Gaye, along with her friend and guitar teacher Ann Rabson, formed *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women,* releasing their self-produced cassette on their own label in 1987. Gaye hit the road full-time to tour with the band in 1988, and then signed with Alligator Records in 1989. *Saffire* quickly went from playing local clubs to entertaining thousands at concert halls and festivals all over the world, winning praise everywhere they went. Gaye's song, *Middle Aged Blues Boogie*, earned the W.C. Handy Award (the Grammy of the blues community) for Song Of The Year in 1990.

As Gaye's---and *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women's*---popularity grew over the course of six albums, Gaye, already a blues lover, dove even deeper into the music she loved, absorbing songs and history as well as vocal and songwriting techniques. She conducts workshops on blues vocals, blues history and women's blues all over the country. She even released an instructional video, *Blues Vocal Techniques*, available on Homespun Tapes. And in the little spare time she has, Gaye also sits on the Steering Committee of the Blues Music Association, a trade organization she helped to found. With the release of *Bitter Sweet Blues*, Gaye adds another highlight to her already impressive career.

With *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women* as popular as ever, the new solo album and constant touring, Gaye Adegbalola's musical career is in full swing. From her earliest childhood memories to her rocking teen years to her political and social leanings, Gaye Adegbalola's *Bitter Sweet Blues* captures all of her influences together in a perfectly conceived collection. "In the blues Gaye found her voice and discovered a way to infuse humor into pain," said *Blues Review*. Her performances are a powerhouse of emotion." Indeed, the power and emotion of Gaye Adegbalola infuses into *Bitter Sweet Blues* is that of a woman who knows what she wants and knows just how to sing, dance, think, laugh and shout out to get it.

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iN TuNe

music review by Erik Aston

photo by Michael Comte

NATALIE COLE

With The London Symphony Orchestra
THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS
[Elektra Entertainment]

No matter how gloriously and festive my Christmas is, it is never complete until I hear the melodious voice of the late Nate King Cole crooning "The Christmas Song". As always the song conjures warm and distant memories of snowy Christmas mornings in Chicago with my brothers and me around our gift-laden tree and steaming mugs of Hershey's hot chocolate and melted marshmallows. I can still hear our laugher as our mother replayed the song through out the morning.

This year for being a good boy, I was rewarded with yet another poignant duet of Grammy winning Natalie Cole and her late father Nat 'King' Cole singing my inspiring Christmas classic. It has been said time and time again, that one should never 'mess' with the classics, for they stand alone in their beauty, grace and timelessness. Natalie has dared to crossed this line, not once, but twice before with astounding successes with her father's recordings, and now that the lady has ventured into that most sacred realm yet again, we, the listening audiences, are once more blessed with a classic duet from this gifted father/daughter team. Ms. Cole surely must be thanking the heavens for the wonders of technology.

With this CD, "The Magic of Christmas", Natalie brings a new elegance to more of her Christmas favorites. It's a brilliant follow up to her last holiday offerings "Holly and Ivy". This time Ms. Cole and award winning producer Fred Salem have added the lush and sweeping sounds of The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bob Krogstad. The highlights include a breathtaking arrangement of "O Tanenbaum" and a beautiful "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". Natalie's voice has grown richer throughout the years and the maturity reveals itself like the brilliance of a DeBeer's diamond.

Cole takes a swinging swipe at the holiday standard "The Twelve Days of Christmas" that made me sit up and take notice, for truly it is the one Christmas song I could hate. Thank God Ms. Cole shares my point of view on the song and reaches for the fun and hilarity buried within this old chestnut.

Her gospel approach to "Mary, Did You Know" will have you rocking back and forth as it becomes a testament to the art of the old Negro spiritual. Cole makes it a triumph and a joy to listen to. "My Grown-Up Christmas List" highlights Natalie at her most sincere. Her voice grows even more beautiful and the lyrics more profound by her phrasing on "Sweet Little Jesus Boy". Natalie Cole's vocal talent and discriminating taste have served her well for almost three decades. This new CD only compliments an already illustrious career and should be a must for our holiday list. Buy one for yourself and for somebody you love.

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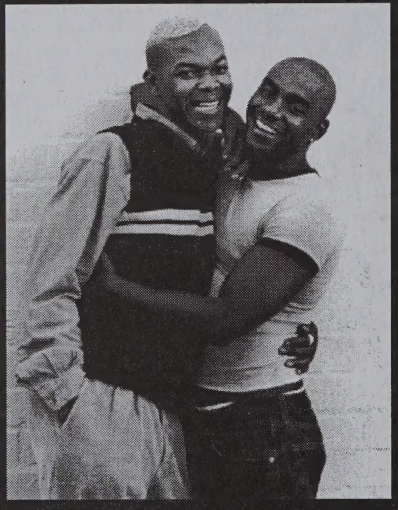

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MaN oN FiLM

by
Sergio W. Willis

It was so hot that Friday afternoon. Yet there I stood, sipping away on a cup of coffee as the sun mercilessly beat down on me.

I stood beside my good friend Lenon Partridge (no relation to you-know-who), observing a film crew. Lenon had some connections in the industry, so he'd arranged for the two of us to watch the filming of a big-budget action flick. I felt somewhat unnerved, watching how technical the whole film-making process was. Being in film class, having the instructor explain things to you, is one thing. Actually seeing that shit in action is a little scary.

In the beginning, it didn't look as if I would see much of anything. This was a letdown, being my first visit to a set. Things got interesting, though, when I caught a glimpse of the picture's star. He was a pretty well-known rapper. Seeing this guy on the big screen did not do him much justice! In real life, he transcended gorgeous. His name I cannot say, but I can describe him. I suppose there's no harm in that, is there??? He's a little taller than average, dark-skinned and nicely-toned. He wears his hair very close-cut, and yes, there are the obligatory tattoos. Several of them. Not enough to be annoying, thankfully. There is no moustache adorning this guy's face, but he does have a cute little goatee which compliments him. It gives him this kind of a rugged, mysterious look. Speaking of look...those eyes...those eyes...those eyes. Lord, those eyes. When they fell on me, I felt as if he knew every single one of my dirty little secrets. Things I don't tell anybody. Not my priest during confession, not my cousin, not even my best friend!

It wasn't until Lenon and I followed the crew inside the building, to film a fight scene, that I felt the full power of those eyes.

"Give it up! It's over!" Mr. Rapper yelled in a calm way, between clenched teeth, at the main villain during their final confrontation. Then, in one fleeting moment as I stood behind the main cameraman, the rapper looked right at me. It was only for one moment, but before I averted my gaze, those eyes said so much to me:

"Who are you?"

"I like what I see."

"I'm one of you."

"What's your name?"

"Come here, boy."

"You look important."

"Meet me outside in the parking lot so I can get your number and shit."

Let me tell you, my friend, I was so glad when one of the producers came over to offer me and Lenon bottles of spring water. I'd gotten so nervous and so hot all of a sudden, I felt as if I might pass out. Thankfully, I didn't. I wondered what my eyes had said, as I stood watching the crew wrap up the scene and then take their lunch break.

"Ready to go?" Lenon asked. I nodded, understanding he had to run off to work. Tempted as I was to stay, I decided not to pass up a free ride back home. But, I wonder if, one day, I will get the opportunity to work with that rapper. Perhaps I can find out the whole story behind those brown eyes. Perhaps one day.

Hope springs eternal

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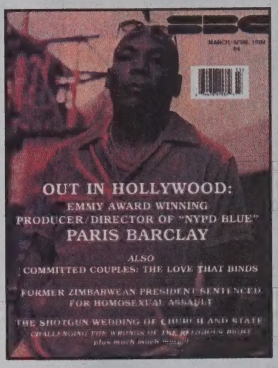

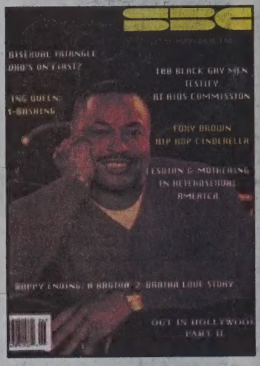

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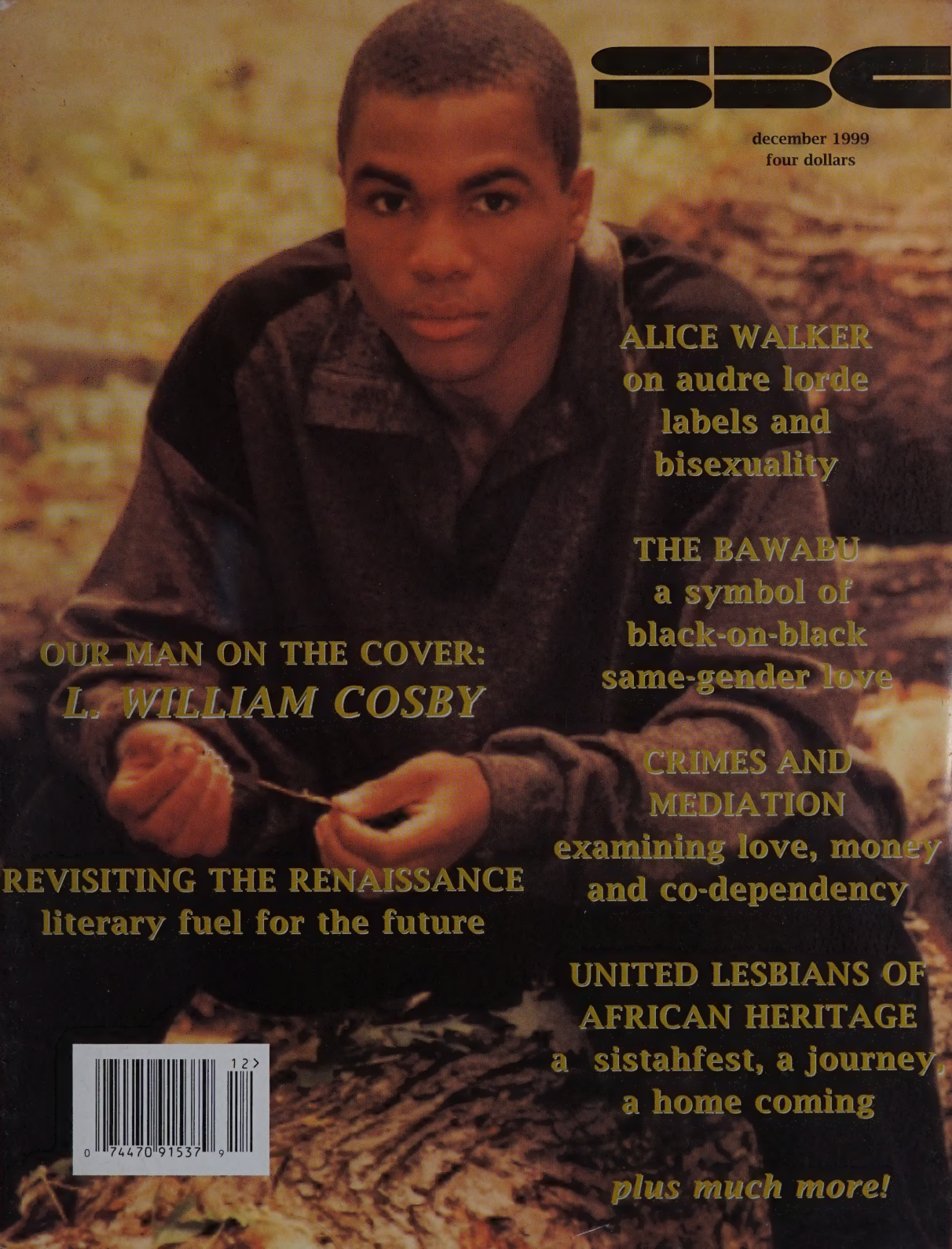
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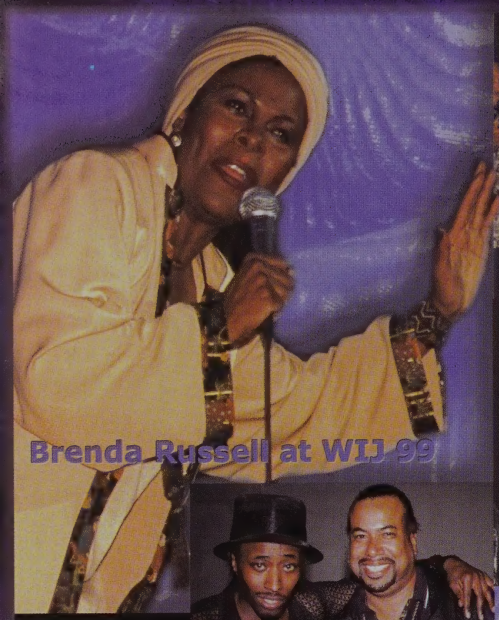
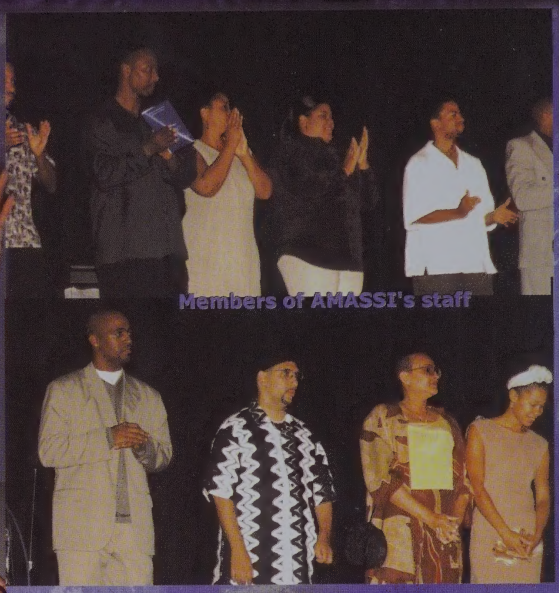


Brenda Russell at WIJ 99



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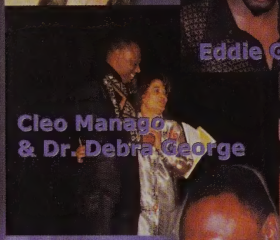

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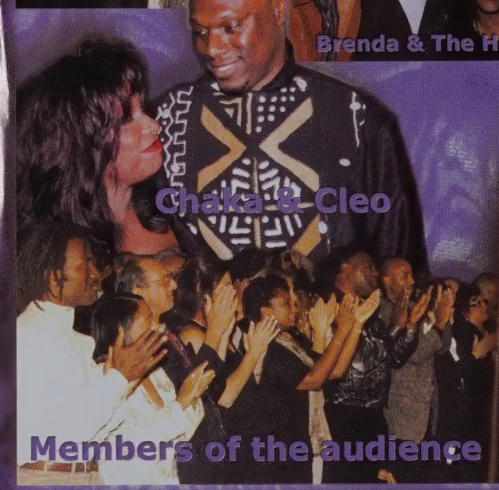

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

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Happy Holiday

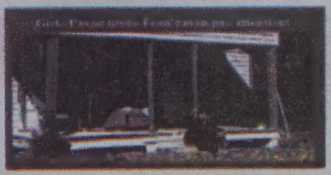
Cover

A Christmas Prayer

May the joy of Christmas spark a flame in your heart that burns with eternal love.

But, I was combing my hair.

Happy be-lated birthday



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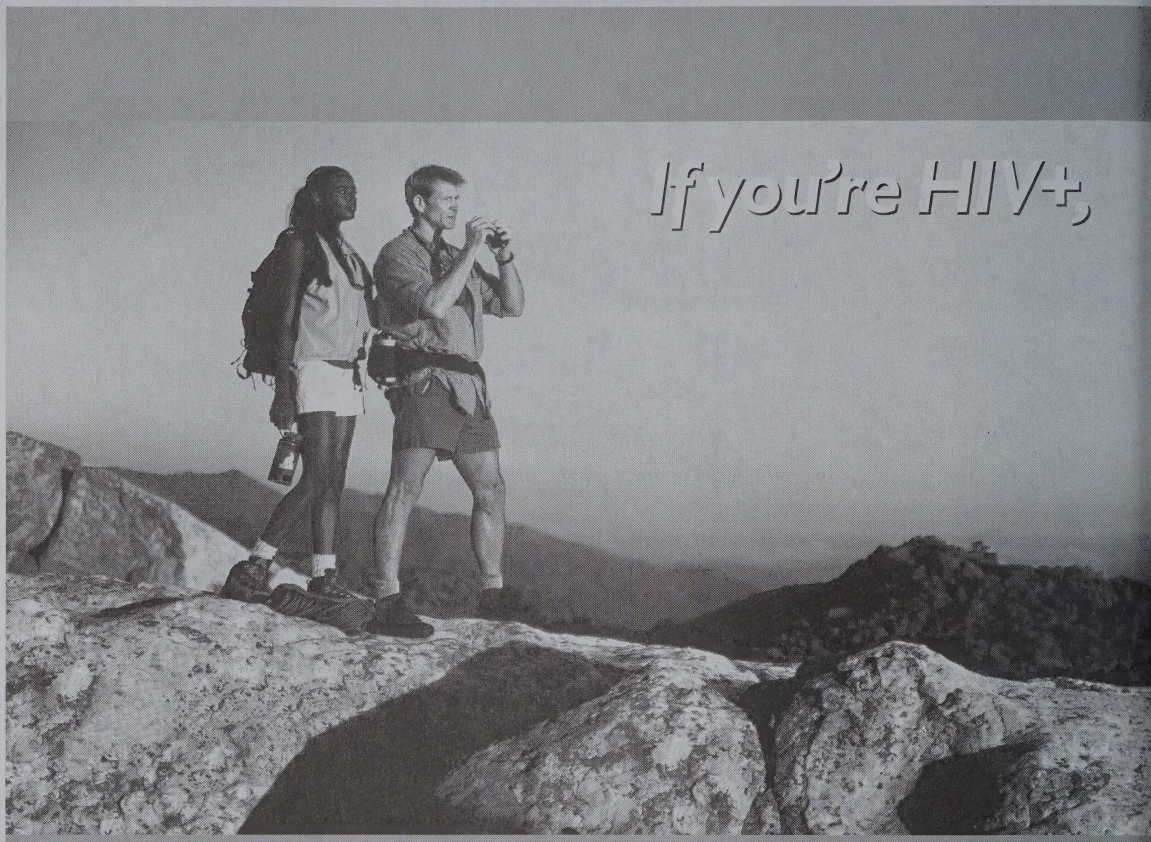

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NIH research showed people taking CRIXIVAN in triple therapy lived longer and experienced fewer opportunistic infections.

Recent year-long research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (Protocol ACTG 320) studied over 1,000 patients and confirmed results from another study.

The group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. This reduction was significant enough for the NIH to recommend the study be stopped, so that all participants could benefit from the findings. Because the study was ended early, there was insufficient data to determine the statistical impact of CRIXIVAN on survival.

CRIXIVAN in triple therapy continues to hold serum viral load down below the limit of detection at the one-year mark.

In a separate, ongoing landmark study, over 90% of the 31 patients receiving CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their HIV serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks (as measured by available tests; the virus may still be present in other organ systems).

Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one-year mark.

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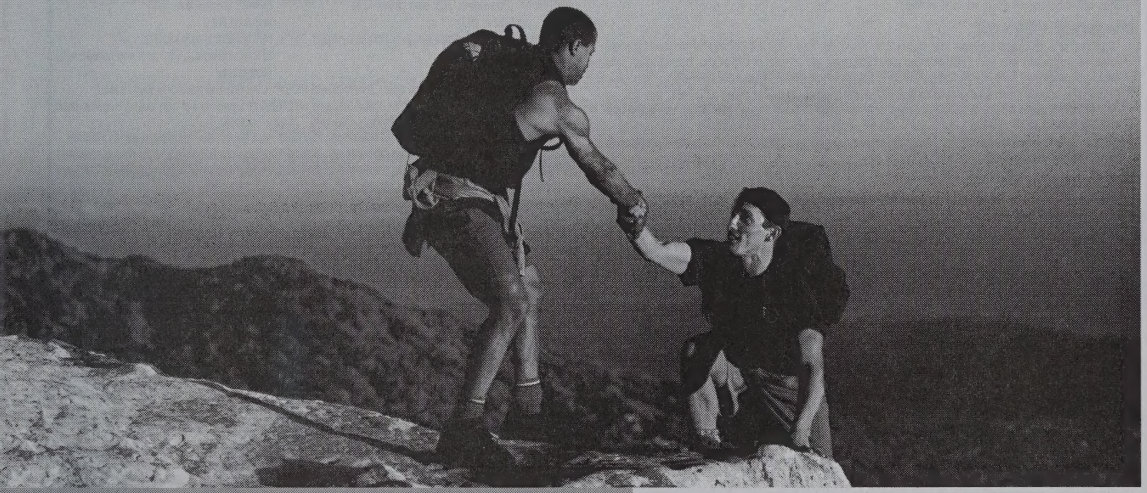
www.crixivan.com

CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.



CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated.

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. There are side effects associated with protease inhibitors in general and CRIXIVAN in particular. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems.

As with other protease inhibitors, changes in body fat, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Additionally, severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients also taking cholesterol lowering medicines called "statins". Please read the following page for detailed information on side effects and dosing.

Focus on the rest of your life.

Learn all you can about HIV therapy. Talk with your doctor. Stay informed and stay the course. With viral load below the limit of detection and an increase in CD4 T-cells, it's easier to look forward to the future with confidence.

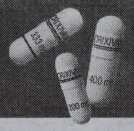
There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

Please read the following page for more detailed information about CRIXIVAN.

Remember to ask your doctor about CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Going the distance.



CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

9024509

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays". If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:

   dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquids (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia
- High cholesterol and you are taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins".

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?**

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)	isoniazid (INH)
BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)	DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Methadone

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXIVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

RESCRIPTOR® (delavirdine) — If you take CRIXIVAN with RESCRIPTOR®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SPORANOX® (itraconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SPORANOX®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SUSTIVA™, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors, including CRIXIVAN, together with some of the cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." Call your doctor if you develop severe muscle pain or weakness.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: allergic reactions; severe skin reactions; yellowing of the skin and/or eyes; abdominal swelling; indigestion; inflammation of the kidneys; inflammation of the pancreas; joint pain; depression; itching; hives; change in skin color; hair loss; ingrown toenails with or without infection; crystals in the urine; painful urination; and numbness of the mouth.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°- 86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This leaflet provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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West Point, PA 19486, USA

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

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Auditions for Singers

gay men's chorus of los angeles

Jon Bailey, Artistic Director
Brian J. Wyatt, Managing Director

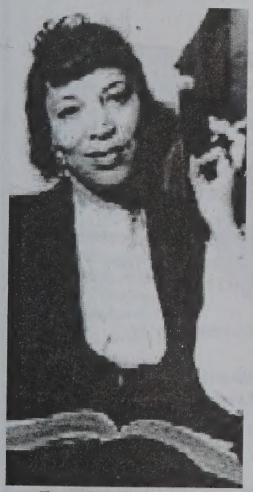
GMCLA is holding auditions for new singing members in January 2000. All interested singers should attend open rehearsals on January 10th and 17th. Private auditions will be scheduled at that time.

Auditions include singing a prepared song, as well as an evaluation of musical skills. Final selection is based on these factors, as well as need within each section of the Chorus. Three major concerts are given each year with three to four performances each. All are required along with regular rehearsals held each Monday evening, 7-10 pm, in Hollywood. ■

Contact the Chorus office at **1-800-MEN-SING** for more information.
Or visit our website at **gmclahq@earthlink.net**.

CoNTeNTS

DECEMBER 1999



Zora Neal Hurston

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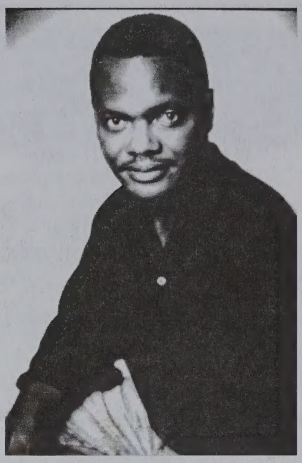

sbc photo by Tory

I was recently made aware of a disturbing incident within our community. A group of brothers in a book club were choosing a new work for discussion. It was offered that instead of buying the book, they would get one and Xerox bootleg copies for distribution to the other members. I was shocked and saddened by this most unscrupulous suggestion. Art theft, intellectual theft, is a most serious crime against the culture and should not be condoned under any circumstances. The author is the owner of the work and making copies without the owner's specific permission is beyond criminal. It is sinful.

$upport our voices. Don't steal their breath. Don't steal their soul.

Never before have we seen a greater number of small Black publishing houses such as GrapeVine Press, Ishai Books, Redbone Press, Moyo Books, Mountain Top Publishing, International Black Writers and Artists, ProCord Books, to name a few, turning out dozens of books, fiction and non-fiction, on the lives, the loves, the struggles and the triumphs of African American hetero- and homosexuals. Never before have our words been freer, uncensored by the major publishing house monopoly who find our literary adventures, discussions, and challenges too indelicate, too bold, too Black and too real for their taste. We are finally in control of our literary culture. Do not be a part of the book burning by dilution, by literary theft. Support the proliferation of our deepest thoughts, of our shared experiences, of our selves as reflected in the glorious words of our village storytellers, and show them the financial gratitude they deserve.

Stealing royalties from our writers is like stealing candy from a baby. Easily done but low on the list of human behavior.

$upport our voices. Don't steal their breath. Don't steal their soul.

I don't even lend out my books anymore. I encourage friends to go out and buy the books. This holiday season I encourage all to give the gift of the written word. Give a friend a book, afford the writer the chance to keep on writing. Don't deny the writer subsistence, a decent living. Don't be the grinch that stole the thinking mind.

Stanley Bennett Clay

SBC

The Africentric Homosexual Magazine published bi-monthly

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Gay Pride
Gay Power
Gay Passion

We celebrate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community and ALL its diversity!

We are excited by the present and optimistic about the future. We are anxious for a time when HIV/AIDS, cancer and other currently life-threatening illnesses no longer rob us of our lives or our loved ones! Until then, we empower people living with life-threatening illnesses and seniors (anyone age 70 or older regardless of their health) to live the longest, highest-quality life possible by getting the money needed to live their life to its fullest! We provide compassionate, confidential, personalized viatical and senior settlement information, counseling and advocacy. Our goal is to get you the highest possible offer in the shortest amount of time, with the least amount of hassle and anxiety for you.

"There is a general feeling in the African-American Community that people won't benefit from a Viatical Settlement. But that isn't true. Viatical Settlements have changed a lot and are continuing to evolve. You need a friend in the business — someone you can trust to help you understand how to create financial stability and security. We are here to help. My teammates and I can answer your questions and show you how to create a better future for yourself!"

– Marvin K. Carter

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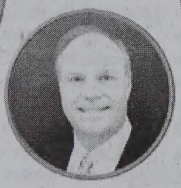

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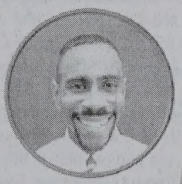

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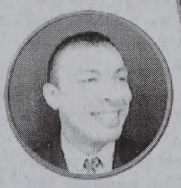

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1,500 MARCH ON OAKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT DURING 'CREATING CHANGE' CONFERENCE

Oakland, California---Some 1,500 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people marched on the Oakland Police Department Saturday night, November 13th, in response to a police officer's slur toward a young African American transgendered person who was the victim of a hate crime.

The march took place during the 12th annual Creating Change conference in Oakland. Creating Change is sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Late Friday evening, a transgendered woman whose name is being withheld to protect her privacy was attacked by two assailants several blocks from the Creating Change conference. An Oakland police officer responding to the attack said, according to witnesses, 'I am tired of having to do all this paperwork. You guys have been told not to be on the corner of 14th and Broadway. I am tired of your shit. Who has to do the paperwork? Me, that's who.'

Activists attending Creating Change learned of the attack throughout the day Saturday. Lead by local organizers, a march and peaceful protest was quickly planned. "What happened last night is a classic case of blame the victim," said NGLTF Executive Director Kerry Lobel. "Transgendered people are not paperwork."

"Creating Change is about transformation," Lobel added. "I hope this event transforms the Oakland Police Department into a caring, sensitive department whose officers, each and every one, understand the words ''to protect and to serve.'"

Pete King, president of East Bay Pride, said violence against GLBT people needs to be met with an immediate response whenever it occurs. "The attack last night is not an isolated occurrence unique to Oakland," King said. "It happens across the United States every day. Women, people of color, people of all faith traditions and people of all gender identities deserve to live free from fear in our city and our country. The victims of these hideous crimes need to be treated with sensitivity and compassion by the police and by other institutions."

Local leaders demanded that the Oakland Police Department investigate the incident, provide sensitivity training to police officers and open a dialogue on GLBT concerns.

DOCUMENTARY ON RUTH ELLIS, 100 YEAR OLD AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIAN, RE-SCREENS AT L.A.'S OUTFEST@ THE VILLAGE

Hollywood, California---A reprise screening of the OUTFEST 1998 Audience Award Winner for OUTstanding Documentary Video on the life of African-American 100 year old Lesbian Activist, Ruth Ellis---*Ruth Ellis @100*---will take place December 15, 1999 at 7 PM. Ruth Ellis is a true portrait of ferocity: She has a web site and an intense daily workout schedule. She loves to dance and can do the electric slide like a pro. Director Yvonne Welbon captures the endearing essence of Elder Ellis, the oldest out African American lesbian in the country whose best advise is to be kind and to live always by the Golden Rule. It becomes clear watching Ruth reminisce about her life as a "woman lover" that she is a living link to the past, and her stories are key to understanding the struggles and accomplishments of lesbians throughout the century.

On the same bill will be Durand Williams' documentary *DW*, which is the African-American filmmakers challenge of and grappling with the enduring legacy of racial misrepresentations in the work of early 19th century racist filmmaker D.W. Griffith. This film is being presented in collaboration with The Pan African Film and Art Festival.

OUTFEST @ THE VILLAGE is a collaboration between OUTFEST and The Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center's Community Outreach and Education Department. All OUTFEST screenings take place at The Village, 1125 North McCadden Place in Hollywood (one block East of Highland, North of Santa Monica Bl.). For further information call 323.960.9200.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO "BLACK GIRLHOOD: AN ANTHOLOGY"

Worchester, Maine---Contributions are sought for a proposed anthology on the topic of girlhood in African American and Diasporic African Women's Fiction and Autobiography. Essays which explore girlhood and coming-of-age as themes within Black women's literature are welcome.

Essays can explore (but are not limited to) the following novels and autobiographies: The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison, The Color Purple by Alice Walker, I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou, Zami by Audre Lorde, Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga, Push by Sapphire, Annie John by Jamaica Kincaid, Mama's Girls by Veronica Chambers, Breath, Eyes, Memory by Edwidge Danticat.

Of particular interest are essays about sexuality, race and images of beauty, violence against girls, and mother-daughter relationships, as well as perspectives on Nation, identity and oppression. Scholarly essays are welcome, as well as personal reaction papers and collaborations between women and girls.

Send double spaced manuscripts (between 25 and 30 pages) in hard copy, a brief biographical statement, and a stamped self-addressed envelop to the address below. Presently seeking a publisher for this volume. Preliminary deadline of December 15, 1999 for inclusion in book proposal package. For all other contributions, the deadline is January 31, 2000. For questions, please contact the editor, via email at: atchison71@aol.com or write to : Gabrie'l Atchison, Ph.D./ c/o Women's Studies/ Clark University/ 950 Main Street/ Worcester, MA 01610

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Children's Holiday Celebration
December 11, 1999

Celebration of Light
December 31, 1999

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SAME-SEX MARRIAGE PROPONENTS BEGIN INITIATIVE PETITION CAMPAIGN

Los Angeles, California---The proponents of an initiative constitutional amendment allowing same-sex couples to marry in California announced today that the California Secretary of State has authorized them to begin circulating petitions to place the measure on the November 2000 ballot.

"On this Thanksgiving Day, we begin our efforts to gather a million signatures from Californians who want to extend the right to marry to include committed same-sex couples," said Tom Henning of Californians for Same-Sex Marriage (CaSSM), a campaign committee organized to secure the passage of the initiative. "That means a million conversations about the rightness and goodness of our relationships."

Henning added that the committee's web site, which has been operating for about two months, has already had thousands of visitors and has helped the committee to identify hundreds of individuals willing to circulate petition forms. Now that the forms are available, the committee projects that thousands of additional petition gatherers will come forward to assist in the effort. In addition to the petition forms themselves, the web site for the proposed initiative contains a first-ever "Petition Center" that allows signature gatherers to track their progress, communicate with each other, and organize efforts in their individual counties.

The proposed same-sex marriage initiative would amend the California Constitution to read: "Two people of the same sex may lawfully marry in California. Such a marriage is subject to the same provisions of California law applicable to other marriages. The partners to the marriage shall meet the same legal requirements as other married persons, and they shall have the same legal rights and obligations as other married persons. This section does not require any church, religion or religious organization to perform any marriage ceremony. This section supersedes any California law.

The proposed initiative stands in stark contrast to another initiative already scheduled for the March 7, 2000 ballot. Proposition 22, also known as the "Knight Initiative" after its author, State Senator "Pete" Knight (R-Palmdale), would amend an existing California law to state that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

Henning predicted that Proposition 22 would go down to defeat in March, and that voters would then "take the affirmative step of ensuring equal marriage rights for same-sex couples by approving a same-sex marriage initiative in November."

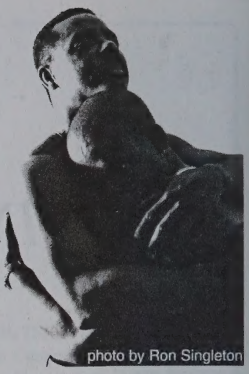


photo by Ron Singleton

Henning noted that even if Proposition 22 were to pass in March, the proposed same-sex marriage initiative would override it next November.

The Californians for Same-Sex Marriage web site is at http://www.samesexmarriage.org

AT THE BEACH HOLDS MILLENNIUM NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Los Angeles, California---At the Beach continues its New Year's Eve tradition with a Millennium New Year's Eve Party to be held this year at the Ivy Substation, 9070 W. Venice Blvd. in the Culver City section of Los Angeles. The formal event will be capped with special surprise guest entertainment.

The Millennium Party will be held from 9 PM until 3 AM with dancing to the music of Calvin Williams of New York City's Octagon as well as music by L.A.'s own top female spinner, E-Que. An elegant buffet dinner will be served with a champagne toast at midnight. In addition, there will be a nationwide New Year's Eve broadcast feed.

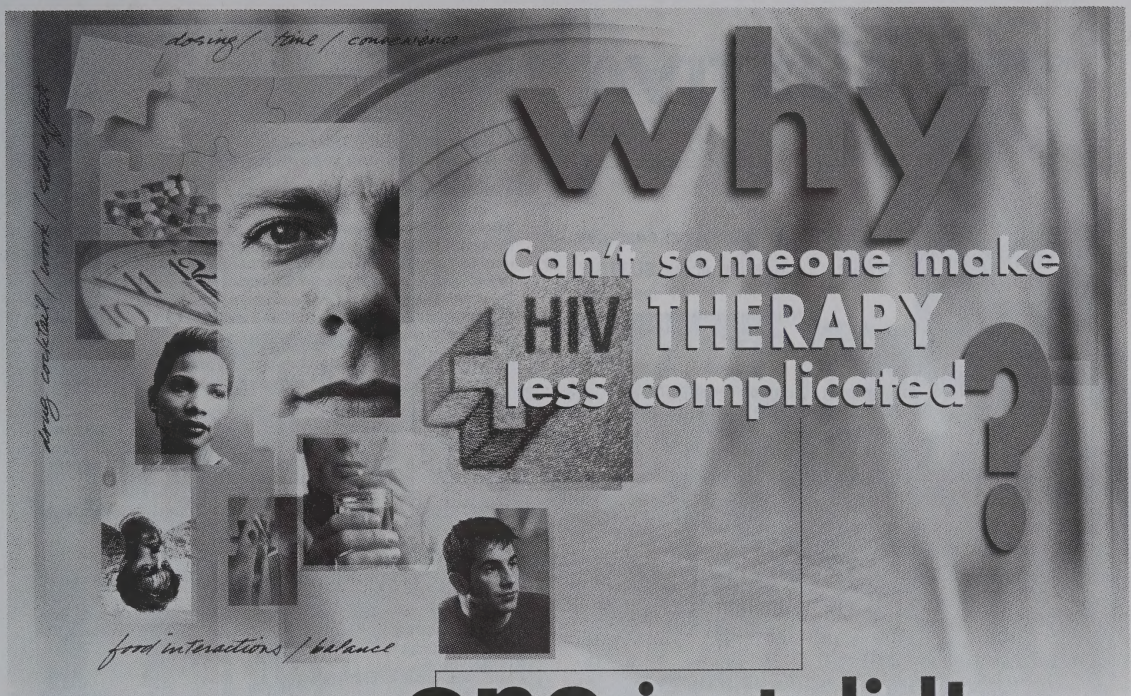
Operating as At the Beach, Shorey, Inc., the business venture, run by an astute board of Black same gender-loving male and female entrepreneurs, has produced the popular and highly profitable At the Beach Unity Celebration for the past 11 years in Malibu, California on the 4th of July Weekend. Last year over 11,000 predominately African American same gender-loving women and men attended the four-day event, making it the largest such gathering West of the Mississippi.

"The New Year's Eve party was the first 'brand extension'; of the ATB franchise," said newly installed ATB President Deborah Thurston, "Now it has become an event in its own right."

At the Beach began in the summer of 1988 with an informal group of friends enjoying a day of planned activities and socializing "at the beach." Eleven years later, participants come from across the country and as far away as Nigeria, Ghana, Mexico, Venezuela, France and England to network and have fun in the sun.

In addition to the annual beach party and New Year's Eve celebration, At the Beach produces other events throughout the year with a major affair scheduled for Memorial Day.

At the Beach can be contacted at 323.293.4ATB or by email at atbla@aol.com



someONE just did!

Once Daily
SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ is the first HIV drug approved to be taken once-a-day as part of your combination therapy. Just take three 200 mg capsules together once daily, with or without food; high fat meals should be avoided. Your doctor may suggest taking SUSTIVA at bedtime to reduce any side effects you may experience.

SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

Now listed among preferred anti-HIV drugs in government guidelines.[1]

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

FOR HIV

Finally, a once daily medication to treat HIV.

SUSTIVA. It's about time.

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*NNRTI - non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor.

For more information on SUSTIVA, call 1-800-4PHARMA or visit our website at http://www.sustiva.com
For more information on the updated DHHS Guidelines, a PDF file of the guidelines is available at http://www.hivatis.org

1. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), December 1998.

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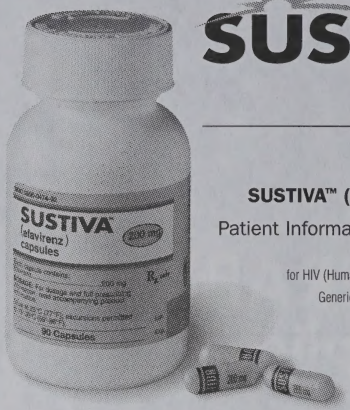

SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA*

(sus-TEE-vah)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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DuPont Pharmaceuticals
Wilmington, DE 19880
Issued September, 1998

THE BAWABU: A Symbol of Black-on-Black Same-Gender Love

by
Leland Gale

The first public display of the Bawabu symbol was on June 28, 1998 at the groundbreaking community debate in Los Angeles, California. There the subject of homosexuality in the Black community was addressed. As Cleo Manago, founder of the Same-Gender-Loving movement, debated the subject with scholar and therapist Dr. Llaila Afrika before a gathering of hetero- and homosexual members of the local Black community who openly gathered together for, arguably, the first time, the sense of oneness, albeit agreement to disagreement, was evident. The presence of same gender-loving Black people in the Black community was and is now a recognized fact.

To that end, The Bawabu symbol was created by artist Olu Kwasi Osei as a self-identification of Afrika-centered Black conscious homosexuals, quickly and popularly becoming known as Same-Gender-Loving (SGL) persons.

(c) 1999 Olu Kwasi Osei

"The Bawabu is a celebration of Black men who love Black men and Black women who love Black women. It is a visual affirmation of Same-Gender-Loving women and men who love Afrikan peoples and struggle on a daily basis for their uplift and empowerment." states the brochure being disseminated throughout the national Black community. "As Afrikan people we have a rich history of creativity that spans thousands of years. It is psychologically unhealthy for us---the people who gave the world the gifts of civilization, religion, science---to continue to embrace the symbols of European cultures. This is especially true when these "cultures" have been, and continue to be, involved in the systematic oppression and exploitation of Afrikan peoples."

In an introductory letter from symbol creator Osei, he emphasizes that the Bawabu symbol represents "a complete rejection of Eurocentric 'gay and lesbian' symbols by Afrika-centered Sisters and Brothers e.g. lambdas, pink triangles and designs derived from the 'rainbow' flag."

The official brochure further states that "the word Bawabu is taken from the Kiswahili language and means 'gatekeeper.' The Same-Gender-Loving Movement's symbol is named the Bawabu in homage to our same-gender-loving Afrikan ancestors. Many of these ancestors were honored or recognized by their societies as being the 'gatekeepers' to the ethereal world. It was believed that this spiritual world could be entered through a series of doors or 'gates.' The unique ability to grant entrance into the spiritual world was derived, in part, from the 'gatekeepers' sexual orientation.."

In her book *The Spirit of Intimacy: Ancient Teachings in the Ways of Relationships*, Sobonfu Some' states, "Gatekeeping is part of one's life purpose, announced before birth and developed through rigorous initiatory training to ensure that it's power is not misused. A gatekeeper is responsible for a whole village, a whole tribe. Gatekeeping is not a game."

The official brochure also points out that the recognition of same-gender-loving ancestors by many ancient Afrikan societies completely contradicts common held beliefs about homosexuality and its relationship to the Afrikan Diaspora: "It is not unusual to hear misguided 'Afrika-centered' women and men state that homosexuality is a white perversion, 'embraced' by Afrikans and those of Afrikan descent, as the result of contamination by European influences. These notions have been completely refuted by the rediscovery of the 'gatekeepers' and their importance to traditional Afrikan life."

In what has become a growing and powerful coalition of Black consciousness homosexual organization throughout the United States, the Same-Gender-Loving Movement is becoming a force to be reckoned with. And The Bawabu symbol can be expected be make its appearance at many of the Black Homosexual political, social and cultural functions that gather almost monthly.

The one challenge, however, may prove to be one of semantics. Olu, the creator and copyright owner of the Bawabu symbol, forbids it's use to any organization that has 'gay and/or lesbian' in it's title, or the reference to the symbol as the 'Black gay and lesbian symbol'. Most of the Black homosexual organizations throughout the country have either gay and/or lesbian in their name.

The use of the Bawabu symbol is free to any organization that reflects the Same-Gender-Loving movement. However, commercial use of the symbol requires a formal licensing agreement between the organization and Project Bawabu, the symbol's copyright and trademark owner. For more information and permission to use the Bawabu write to: Project Bawabu/ c/o Olu Kwasi Osei/ 1195 Keniston Avenue/ Los Angeles California 90019-1710, bawabu@netnoir.net

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE LANDS HOMOSEXUAL TEACHER IN JAIL

by Stanley Bennett Clay

Long Beach, California---The photos of the physical abuse bruises on their little bodies are very real, yet the alleged abusive father has not been arrested. Bryan Edney, respected Long Beach, California educator who is openly homosexual and politically active, who reported the incidents to local police, was indeed arrested, spent time in jail for the first time in his life, has been placed on administrative leave without pay and has had major damage done to his otherwise flawless reputation, all based on what appears to be retaliatory accusations of sexual child abuse levied against him by the alleged abusive father. The father also happens to be Edney's brother.

"I had my nephews spend the weekend with me. On Sunday I discovered some bruises on them," Edney recalls. "I asked them what happened and the oldest one said 'Oh, we fell out of bed,' and I said 'If you have a carpeted house, how could falling out of bed cause this?' So finally he put his head down and started crying and said 'Daddy did it.' Their father, according to [the child], beat them with the buckle of a belt because they weren't moving fast enough. I was devastated. Every emotion that could have taken place within me did so. I was frozen with disbelief. They went on to tell me about how this had happened before.

"The next day I took them back to their house and approached my brother about it and he was very defensive. He was angry at me. Not once did he take a look at the bruises. He then told me he had been in anger-management classes. He asked me not to say anything because he didn't want to upset his status in the classes. He only had a few left to go and he didn't want to mess things up. But then I told him, 'How can you do this to your own child?' He then took the children and locked them up in the back bedroom and wouldn't let me talk to them.

"He told me basically that it was none of my business. They were his kids, 'you don't know how bad they are; when you try to discipline your children in different ways, and it's not working...' he tried to make it sound like what resort did he have."

When Bryan returned to school, he discussed the situation with the school counselor. The counselor ran a check on the father's name. It turned out the father had a record of prior instances of both child and spousal abuse.

In part, according to one application for juvenile court petition dated January 30, 1997 from the Palm Springs Police Department to the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services, the father had been accused of hitting, on several occasions, the two sons with a brush, a belt and a hanger, causing swollen bruises on the hands, legs, arms, and buttocks of the children.

That's when Bryan reported the situation to the authorities. "But nothing was done for a couple of days. I called back to Child Protective Services, couldn't get a response from anyone, I told them I have pictures and the testimonies of the children. No one would accept it. Finally, I was instructed by the counselor to call the police.

"The police couldn't get into the door because, apparently, my brother was not answering the door. Finally, a week had passed and I had done all I could do---I talked with a Fontana police corporal, I talked to a Long Beach police detective, still nothing was done.

"Finally my brother calls me and curses me out. At that point, with still nothing happening, I had to go to Florida for a teachers' convention. When I get back from Florida---this is sometime in July---I get a call from a police detective, and I'm thinking that finally they're going to do something about this situation."

But much to Bryan's horror and disbelief, the detective had called to inform him that charges had been filed against *him*, claiming that *he* had sexually molested the children.

"I told him of course this was false, this was erroneous. This is retaliation. Check the record. On June 1st I filed a child abuse complaint against [the father] for physical abuse, I have the pictures of the bruises, I have my cousins' testimony. They took the pictures for me. They were all there. They saw the bruises and the children told them what had happened. It was pure retaliation. The detective said thank you. I'll get back to you."

On August 8th, Bryan was at work when he was called to the principal's office. Two detectives presented him with a warrant for his arrest. He was handcuffed and taken down to jail, booked, and fingerprinted.

"They had me locked up from Tuesday until Thursday," he recalls painfully, "I've never ever been arrested. I've never had anything more than just a traffic violation. This was just ridiculous. Apparently, my brother had his wife, who is Caucasian, take the kids down to the police station. They [apparently] intimidated the children into drumming up stories about me. They made my coming out to the kids as something of a sexual seduction. They made me out to be a sexual predator. Every stereotype that exist about homosexuals, or gay teachers, they played on, and the police took it and ran with it.

"At first they had my bail set at $150,000. Fortunately, at my arraignment, the D.A. had the pictures of the bruises and my bail was reduced to $50,000."

A friend was able to come up with the nonrefundable deposit on the bail and Bryan was released. That was back in August. Since then he has been going back and forth to court trying to fight the charges. "The entire focus is off of the people that it should be on in the beginning. There's no physical evidence to substantiate anything they made the children say about me. The children are obviously afraid because

they're in an environment where there is abuse going on.

"Nothing. Nothing, nothing, nothing but racism and, I believe, homophobia within the Long Beach Police Department, is what this is about. They used every stereotype they could about African American men, about gay men and gay teachers and they ran with it."

As Bryan goes through the ordeal of defending himself against unsubstantiated charges, as well as not being able to teach, or even make a living in a profession that he dearly loves, he admits that the feelings of depression are there: "Some days I'm okay, some days I'm angry. I was a good teacher. I am a good teacher. And now I'm on leave without pay. I've been forced to subsist on donations and assistance from family and friends."

Bryan Edney's dilemma is not an unusual situation. Many homosexual men have resisted giving in to their natural paternalistic instincts because of the easily believed 'Children's Hour'-esque trick bag compounded by ethnic sexual myths. Many fine and caring African American teachers and big brothers and mentors could be loss to The Village out of fear of false accusations that destroy without benefit of truth.

So what is to be done? Same gender-loving brothers are as obligated as heterosexual brothers to care for the young warriors of the village. Same gender-loving brothers have the same human impulse and desire to care for the village young.

That desire, that obligation, that God-directed privilege should not be denied our good men, nor should their acts of sharing and giving of themselves, their honorable acts of guardianship make them easy targets and walking examples of ruined lives.

Indeed, there are those, heterosexual as well as homosexual, who engage in sick and unspeakable acts of child molestation, and all efforts must be used to protect society, especially or children, from these shameful individuals. But vigilance can not and should not turn into vigilantism, or racial and/or sexual orientation profiling. The only sexual nature that child molesters have in common is a demented sexual nature. And sexual perverts come in all sizes, shapes, colors, genders, and desires.

As black men, we all know that we are presumed guilty until proven innocent, and we must constantly bond together to defend ourselves against this backwards sense of justice. As Africentric homosexual men, we must do the same. We must bond together and fight for real justice.

Is Bryan Edney guilty as charged? Could be. Could be not. I happen to believe not. But until a court decides, this man, with no evidence against him whatsoever except the coerced accusations of two frightened and beaten little boys, has been forced to go through an ordeal that no presumed innocent man should have to go through. While His union has secured a lawyer for him, the school system has denied him an income. And why? For doing his duty as a teacher, for reporting child abuse, for being an easy target, for being Black and homosexual. I encourage all of you who know Bryan, know of Bryan or are getting to know him in this writing, will contribute to this brother's situation, to help him out with his rent and his bills, will send some bucks of confidence and support, will let your money say 'I support you, my brother.' I hope every brother out there realizes: This could easily be you.

[Donations in the form of checks and money orders should be made out to The Bryan Edney Innocence Fund and sent to The Teachers Association of Paramount/ 17434 Studebaker Rd./ Cerritos, California 90703. The phone number at the Association is 562.924.9311]

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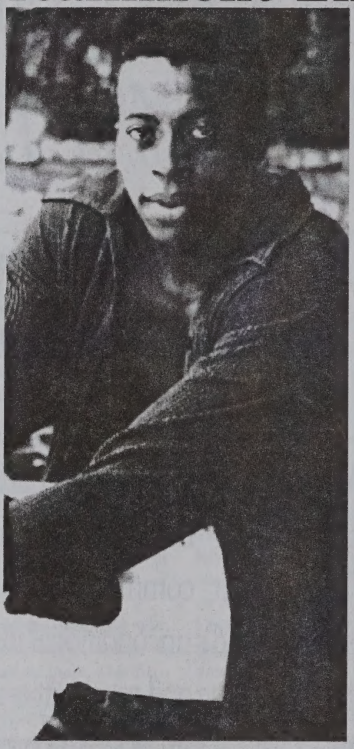

story by
Gerry Proffett

Native Los Angeleno Kran Clay has, over the years, has been well known for many things: serving as an on-air interviewer for a nationally syndicated TV sports show; appearing in commercials as an actor, model and spokesperson in Australia; and running a model and talent Agency here in Hollywood.

Soon, though, Clay's name will be heard in connection with another venture he's involved himself in---the purchase of the Studio City, California piano bar and cocktail lounge, Oasis. Recently, I was able to catch up with Kran and talk with him about his background and his ambitious career, and to ask what led him to the Oasis purchase. I discovered that Clay's entrepreneurial drive is one with strong family precedent.

"My mother's family came to L.A. by the turn of the century," he relates. "My great-granddad worked as a janitor when he first came here and then started a janitorial service and put his sons through school."

One of his great-uncles worked as a policeman, then as a lawyer and judge. His mother involved herself with, among other things, running her own daycare center, and his sister is in the process of opening a beauty school.

"The family credo," Kran states, "is 'Be in business for yourself. Working for someone else will never get you anywhere.' My mom, my cousins, everybody---they all have businesses."

Education, too, plays an important part in the Clay family mindset. "Education was always the first and foremost thing in my family. It was never a choice---you were going to go to school, period."

For Kran, this meant USC, where he completed a communications degree in three years, at the age of twenty. "I chose communications because I was going to gear it toward entertainment in the area of production."

While going to college he worked at Northrop as a computer operations assistant. The skills he learned in this position are ones he went on to refine and to use in landing a string of higher-paying computer analyst jobs.

And during all of this were other projects. There was Kran Clay Productions, which produced a calendar whose proceeds benefited a center for abused women. There was a magazine-format cable-TV show, *Hype Scene*. And there was a position as an associate producer on the nationally syndicated sports show, *The Other Side of Victory*.

"I was the consummate overachiever," Kran says of this period. I did everything. I juggled four careers at the same time...(then) something happened that made me crash and burn. I had to reevaluate my life."

The incident to which he refers was an unfortunate automobile accident. Because of this and other factors Clay eventually chose to take a holiday in Australia for a few weeks. This visit, which lasted three years, turned out to be one of the most enriching and productive periods in Clay's life.

"Within three days of arriving I had an agent. I was booked on a Pepsi commercial (and) I was signed as a spokesperson for this softdrink called (ironically) 'Oasis'."

Summers were spent in Europe, where he would tour with a friend who was pursuing a singing career. "They would just pay me to do whatever," Clay says enthusiastically. "I would just go to a club and the owner would come over and say 'Would you like to dance here? I'll pay you to come here every week and dance on this podium.'"

Part of this popularity Clay attributes to the relative absence of Blacks abroad. "People would come up to you in McDonald's and ask you to just talk with them...I feel infinitely blessed to have been to the places I've been, the different cultures. I think I grew so much from my travels.

"When I came back I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. I know that I came back with money and I thought, 'Ok, let's do something constructive with this money.'"

With a partner, Clay started the Ebony Agency, which casts motion picture and television extras. Later, with a talent agent's license, he began Doubletake Models and Talent, which only takes on current SAG (union) members and which he operates out of his large and elegantly furnished view home in the Hollywood Hills.

Other projects on Clay's slate at the present include a few screenplays, a possible book, and a gay-themed television show. I asked what made him want to add the Oasis purchase to this list .

"I used to go to this little bar in Inglewood (California). It's a neighborhood bar like Cheers. I wanted to buy it because I liked the feeling. The owner wasn't ready to sell and he still isn't."

So, along with a broker, Clay started looking for other joints. Nothing seemed to fit the bill, though, being either too small or too unprofitable. He tried opening a new venue in West Hollywood but found the city's tangle of permits and regulations much too onerous.

In the end, Clay says of the Oasis deal, "I just walked in there and made a cold offer on it." A good move, indeed.

The Oasis functions as one of the more tasteful gay bars in the San Fernando Valley section of Southern, California. Located on the popular Ventura Boulevard near a string of other gay venues---Apache, Oil Can Harry's and Queen Mary---the Oasis is a classic piano bar featuring a large curving baby grand from which many a local crooner has tickled the ivories.

And although mindful of the Oasis' mainstay of regular and loyal patrons, there are a few opportunities to work with some of the programming that already exists, such as that on Monday and Tuesday evenings, which are traditionally slow in the bar trade.

For these nights Clay plans on working with a promoter "to see if I can draw a broader base of people in. I don't want to label it Black people, white people, young people, old people; I like to make it very general and broad-based."

And there will be a much heavier emphasis on promotion and publicity. Given Clay's savvy background in the entertainment world there shouldn't be much doubt that what he does do with the Oasis will add to the myriad of live entertainment opportunities in the Los Angeles area.

"They (Oasis patrons) can always look for what they expect to find there," he says of the ownership transfer. "But they can also expect to see some improvements for the greater good. The bottom line in this business is give the people what they want and they'll come back for more."

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"She had had her taste of men. In fact she had had her fill of them. Although she had been married to the same Lamont Lester-Allegro for some 20 odd years, her stretch---long and checkered---as a stool warmer at too many hedonistic haunts tailor-made for single black Baldwin Hills bourgies was smoky testament to her dissatisfaction on the home front. Although her outings usually proved anemic they were frequent enough to cause her older best friend and fellow bar fly, Elaine, to jokingly snap-read, "You should get out less'.

And she couldn't agree more. Yet...she did truly enjoy her addiction to the candy store view of pretty young black men at bargain time when sophisticated soul sisters stripped of their ladyisms and armored with their charge cards and Trojans and Slauson Arms Motel room keys, pushed and shoved passed her to have at the dark, fresh and fleshy goods displayed before them. It was 1989."

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THE MILLENIUM MARCH ON WASHINGTON: KEEPING AIDS IN FOCUS

by Duane Cramer

Bayard Rustin warned us against "behaving as if the truth were not the truth."

But that's exactly what America's fad culture has done to us. And let's face it, America is famous for focusing on "fads."

The media hype the latest diets, the hottest stars, the newest movies, the most recent scandals. New fads are pre-sold, mass-sold and oversold. We're living in the sound byte era. As a result of 30 second commercials, the ability to instantly delete e-mail, cellular phones, pagers, faxes and a dizzying array of new technologies, we are bombarded with information. News and events have to be sensationalized to hold our attention. And that's sad, because one of the casualties has been attention to the ongoing AIDS crisis.

It's true: The focus on AIDS is waning. There is a new myth -- and it is a myth -- that says, "With all the new drugs and combination therapies, the AIDS epidemic is over."

Unfortunately, both outside and inside the gay community, too many people no longer take the AIDS crisis seriously. Yet, new communities are being infected at rapid and alarming rates, especially women, youth and people of color in North America and major population groups in Africa, Asia and South America.

As an African American, I'm particularly concerned about what's happening to people of color. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, African Americans now represent more than one-third of all reported cases of AIDS in the United States. African Americans account for over 43% of all new cases, though we comprise only 12% of the U.S. population. Latino populations account for 20% of new cases of HIV and AIDS and African American women represent 60% of all new cases among women. These statistics are staggering.

In spite of these realities, federal funding for resources in people of color communities is still scarce. I'm thankful for the commitment of the Black Congressional Caucus and encouraged by the recently initiated federal study of AIDS in communities of color. But this federal study is not unlike placing a Band-Aid on a massive gaping wound. As a result of pervasive and continued racism and homophobia, the growing HIV and AIDS epidemic in the African American and Latino communities is not given the attention nor the funding it would receive if the epidemic were still growing in the white community. Witness, for example, the financial condition of some of the largest and most established HIV and AIDS organizations.

AIDS is one of the worst mass plagues on a global scale in history. The millions of new HIV cases in Africa and Asia are leaving hundreds of thousands of children orphaned. In Africa alone, more than 35 million children have been orphaned by AIDS. The pervasive poverty that already exists in third world countries is exacerbated, and will be for decades, by this disease. Drugs are not available in too many places. And where they are available, they are often prohibitively expensive.

But in the United States, AIDS is no longer a 'sound byte'. Somewhere between the exciting debates over barebacking, public sex, queer politics, and a slew of "issues de jour," we have forgotten that this disease is not over. AIDS funding is dropping, our community has new interests, and we who have carried the scars of losing our loved ones, are left with an ache in the pit of our stomachs.

As a Black man living with HIV, I know all too well the need for increased awareness. This is one of the main reasons why I am on the Board of Directors for the Millennium March on Washington and serving as a Co-Chair of this 4th national GLBT March on Washington. The AIDS crisis is a federal issue. Health care should not be a luxury. Healthcare, for everyone, should be a right. When has it ever been in our best interest to be quiet?

Can our national politicians guarantee that no more cuts to AIDS funding and research will be made? Can they guarantee that women, youth and people of color will be given national priority? This issue is not just about Pride, this issue is about passion.

This is what I owe to my Brothers and Sisters, to my fellow people of color.

This is what I owe to everyone who has died of AIDS, and to those of us today who are living with HIV and AIDS.

This is what I owe to the children and the families and friends who are left with only their panels, and pictures, and memories of their loved ones.

And this is what I owe to my father, who died of AIDS. His spirit, passion and commitment will be with me at the Millennium March on Washington on April 30, 2000.

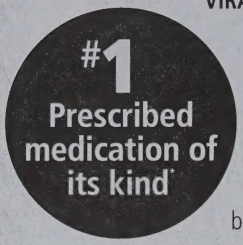
It's still true: Silence equals death. And activism equals life.

[Duane Cramer is a resident of San Francisco and an AIDS activist. He brings incredible passion and sensitivity to his HIV and AIDS work. His father, a professor at Howard University, died of AIDS-related complications in 1986. Duane, too, is HIV+.

Out of his commitment for HIV and AIDS awareness, Duane was awarded a social service leave-of-absence by his employer, Xerox Corporation, in 1998. He devoted this special leave to work with the AIDS Memorial Quilt and to HIV education among communities of color, especially African American and Latino school-aged youth.

During his leave of absence from Xerox, Duane met with school superintendents, administrators, school nurses and teachers across the United States and has spoken to high school groups of up to 1800 students.

He's a Board of Directors member of the Millennium March , and one of four national co-chairs of the event. He is also a Board Member of the San Francisco Community Center Project.]



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help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free **1-888-VIRACEPT** or visit **www.agouron.com**. (Refer to the important information on the next page.)

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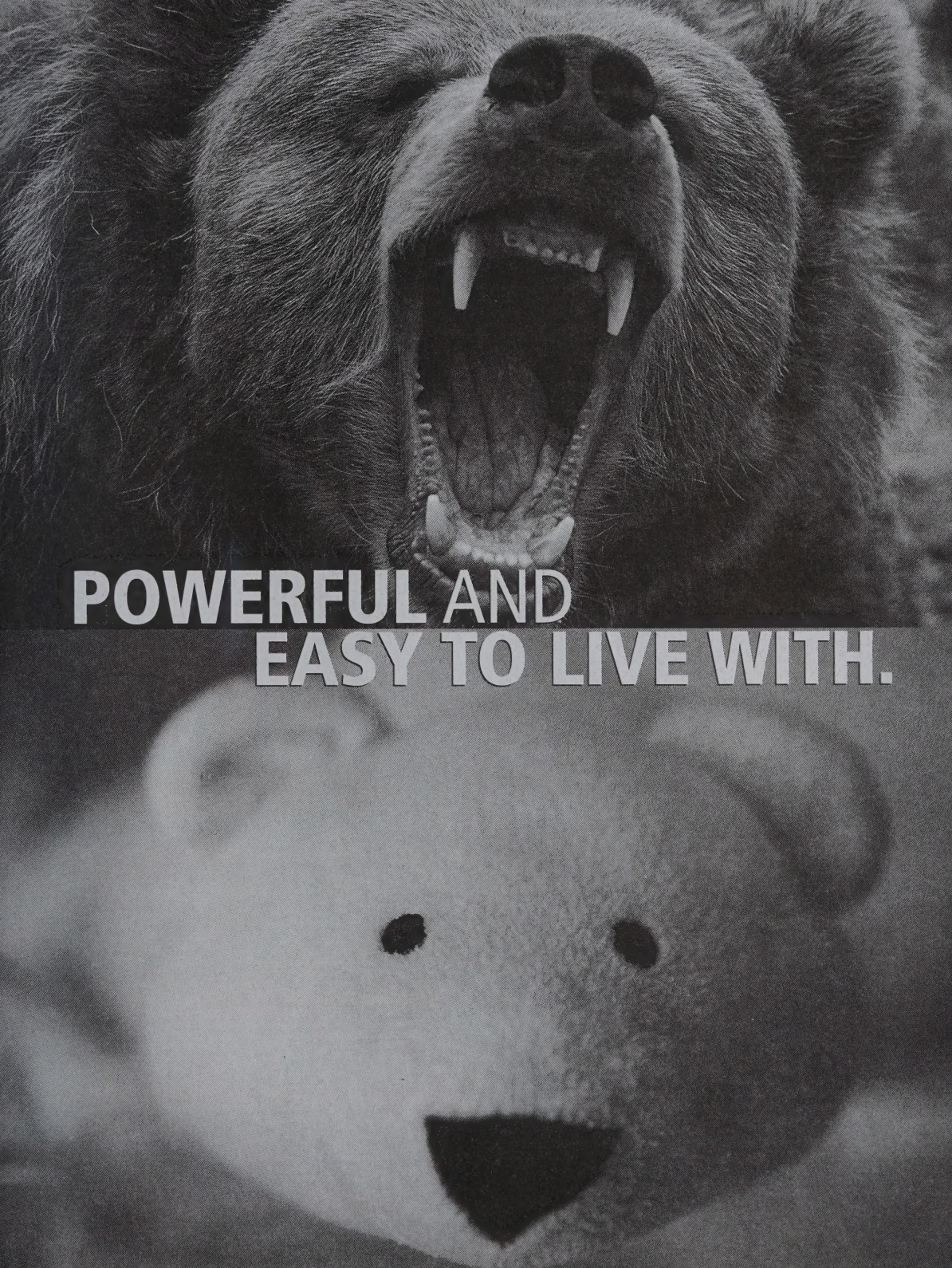
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Information for Patients About VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)
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For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:
- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

  Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

  This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:
- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

  These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

  If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:
- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Viramune® (nevirapine)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

  VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)

  The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

  The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

  The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight Kg	Body Weight Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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ouR MaN oN THe CoVeR:

L. WILLIAM COSBY

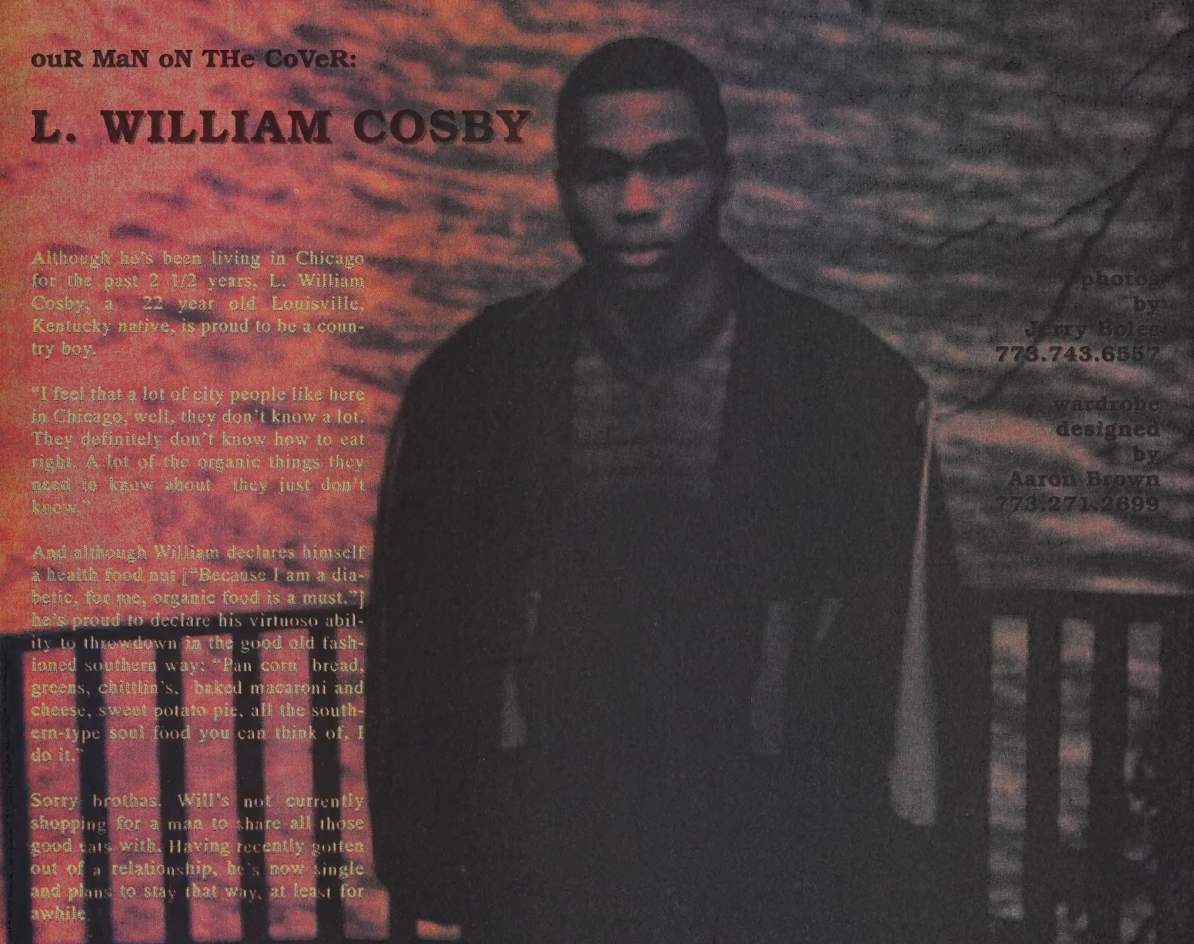


photo by Jerry Boles 773.743.6557

wardrobe designed by Aaron Brown 773.271.2699

Although he's been living in Chicago for the past 2 1/2 years, L. William Cosby, a 22 year old Louisville, Kentucky native, is proud to be a country boy.

"I feel that a lot of city people like here in Chicago, well, they don't know a lot. They definitely don't know how to eat right. A lot of the organic things they need to know about they just don't know."

And although William declares himself a health food nut ["Because I am a diabetic, for me, organic food is a must."] he's proud to declare his virtuoso ability to throwdown in the good old fashioned southern way: "Pan corn bread, greens, chitlin's, baked macaroni and cheese, sweet potato pie, all the southern-type soul food you can think of, I do it."

Sorry brothas. Will's not currently shopping for a man to share all those good eats with. Having recently gotten out of a relationship, he's now single and plans to stay that way, at least for awhile.

"I don't know, maybe it's me. A love life is something that hasn't really worked for me lately." States the young man who knew he was homosexual at 4 and came out at 15, "I plan to be single for awhile and just concentrate on career. I mean, I date, but getting involved in a relationship is something I don't see right now. I want to get myself established financially."

But if and when he starts looking again, who would be his ideal man?: "Someone with common sense. I'm not too keen on looks, not like I used to be and I can't believe I'm saying this now (laugh), but, you know, someone I can relate to. Someone I can sit down with and have a conversation with day in and day out. Someone where we can enjoy each other's company. That would be fine.

"I would prefer someone close to my age but I also enjoy experience as well. The more experience a person has the more I tend to get closer to them.

"Someone that's serious about education, serious about working and maintaining a job and someone who has high goals. If you have all those things, man, looks are really not that important.

"The last person I dated was an average Joe, 24 years old, with an Associate degree. But there was nothing [physically] glamorous about him. Most guys think that if they date somebody they have to look like Tyson Beckford or some supermodel, but that's not true. This person I was with didn't treat me like a trophy. Most guys treat me like a trophy and that makes me feel bad, because it's like that's the only thing they're looking at---the outside---they're not really looking at the inside, how I think, how I talk, how I feel. They're just looking at how I look.

But his looks are indeed servicing the handsome 5' 9", 163 lbs. professional model who has appeared in numerous print ads throughout the country, yet it seems to not phase him as the self-confessed workaholic busies himself getting to know his new adoptive city while contemplating his future.

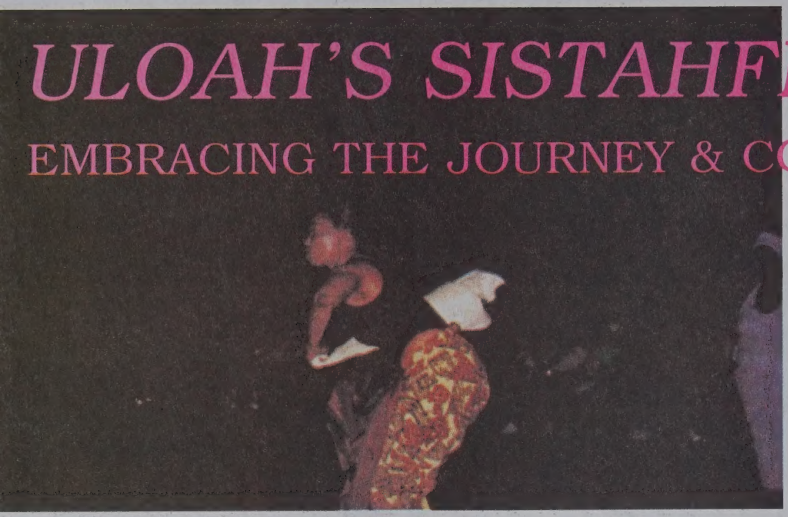
"Back in Louisville I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere, whether it was in the homosexual or heterosexual world. So leaving Louisville and coming to Chicago was like coming to a whole new playground.

"I like living in Chicago, though it has its ups and downs. I'm giving the city a chance and I'm giving myself a chance to get to know the city. I'm exploring the city a lot more; museums, etc."

And he's also following his own advice: "Stay focus and you'll succeed. And trust God."

ULOAH'S SISTAHFEST

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY & COMING HOME



written and photographed by Jennifer Glover

During the first weekend of October, I was one of hundreds of black lesbians who flocked to Camp Shalom high in the hills of Malibu, California for ULOAH's (United Lesbians of African Heritage) 9th annual SISTAHFest retreat. And what started out as a small gathering of 60 like-minded women back in October of 1991, has mushroomed into a serious, yet fun-filled spiritual and emotional feast nourishing the hunger of the African American Lesbian.

"ULOAH has taught me togetherness, acceptance, love, and most of all, sharing, stated one of the organization's board members, Erica. "I am much more independent, and I actually learned how to share! I use to be a selfish person. [But now] I love giving of myself and something positive to other women. I love bringing them great entertainment and SISTAHFest to the community."

Although Erica conceded that this year's turnout was smaller---last year's event was attended by 400 women---she was proud to announce that this year's entertainment was the "best we've ever had! It was excellent!"

On Friday night we watched filmmaker Sidra Smith's passionate and provocative movie, *A Luv Tale*, (personally, I can't wait for the sequal) and at the end, some of the cast members, Angela Means and Lana Moorer (better known as MC Lyte) came on stage. After introducing themselves they let us stampede them with questions and photos. Not only was the movie a great contribution to the retreat, but these sistahs gave of their time to come out, converse and interact with us.

Saturday night was the SISTAHMoon Celebrity Showcase. Sharon Bridgforth, the acclaimed author of the *bull-jeans stories* (Redbone Press), read from her work profoundly, and it was deep-felt by all.

Comedienne Annie McKnight was a riot! She had us dying, especially with her impersonations, and Joi Cardwell performed from her CD *Deliverance*. Her sounds were smooth and mellow; pure music for the soul. Also, Medusa and Soinja Marie had us roaring! They were so extreme and full of uninhibited emotion. Their collective performance was extremely intense. Quite simply, the Celebrity Showcase was da bomb!

But even beyond the entertainment, SISTAHFest provided so much more. There were many informative, intriguing, and much-needed workshops on women's health issues.

"Women's health issues have been ignored," stated board member Kari, "especially black women's health. So little is known about our health. Heart disease, fibroids, and high blood pressure are problems that mainly affect Black women. We need to know the signs, symptoms, and symbols to look for."

Other workshops of interest that filled the weekend was one on Financial Freedom,

facilitated by D. Lisa Powell, which was very practical and beneficial. Amy Andre of *Good Vibrations* presented the provocative *Tip Toe Through The Two Lips* and *Feel Great About Sex* sessions. The first class discussed the female sexual organs, how they function and various ways of stimulation. The workshop also discussed which toys are best suited for you, how to care for them and, of course, masturbation. Yvette J. Freeman's discussion of Uterine Fibroids was very thought provoking.

There were also workshops on Creative Writing for the Soul, Yoga, Meditation, Understanding Astrology, Henna Mystique, SISTAHS in Recovery, and Intimate Partner Abuse.

"I have flown in from Detroit to attend SISTAHFest for the last 7 years" stated Dr. Kofi Adoma, Ph.D. "I haven't missed one yet! To me SISTAHFest is the "norm" for one weekend. [Here] I can embrace and be embraced by Black lesbians!"

I, personally, found ULOAH to be a dedicated organization geared to the needs of our community. What ULOAH is doing is wonderful. They are bringing women together on a regular basis to assist and support our physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

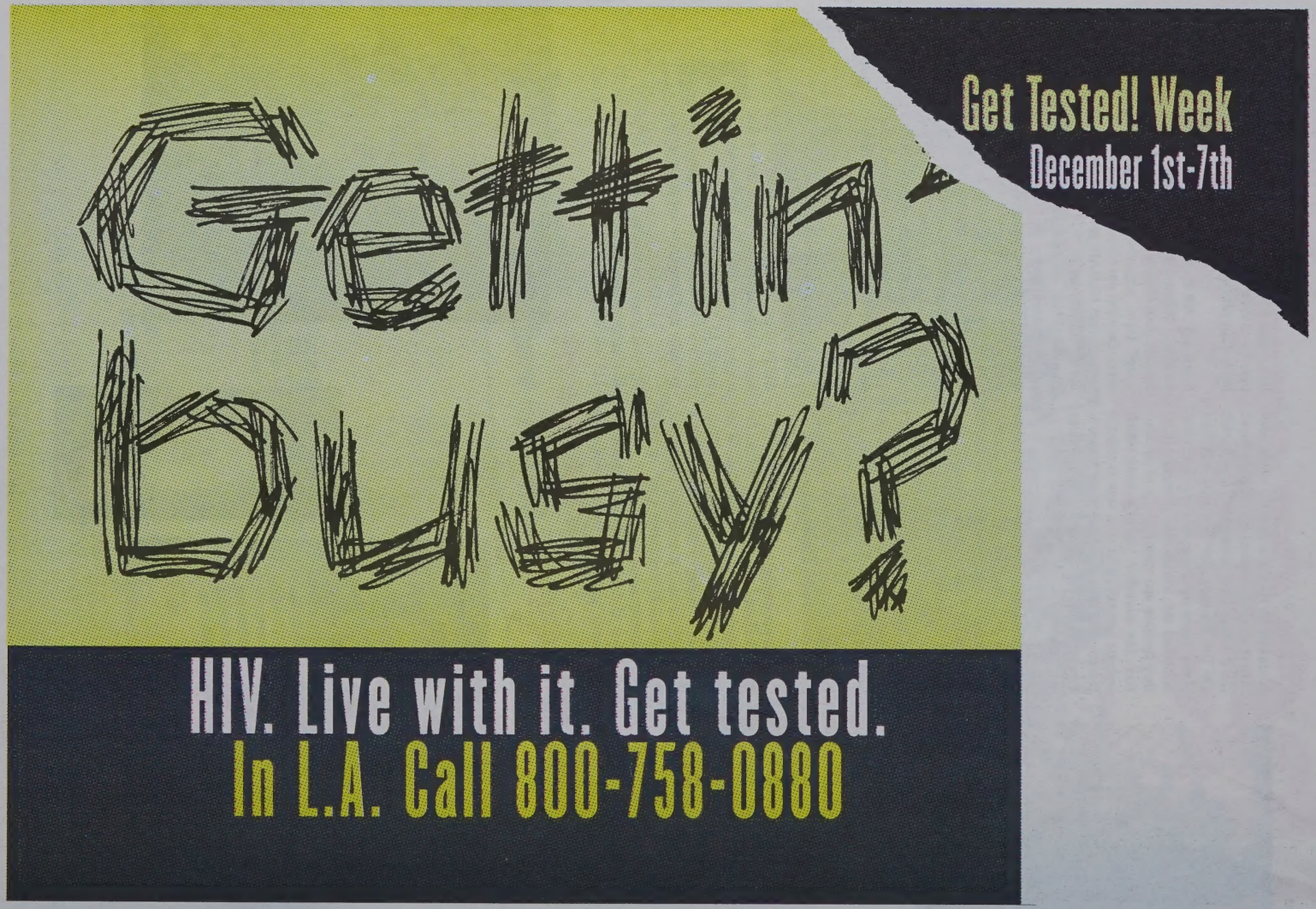
But ULOAH needs our support. A small amount of yourself will go a long way, whether it's volunteering your time or contributing financially. ULOAH needs your patronage.

I saw and felt unconditional love, understanding, fellowship, unity, and growth from most of the women. I observed deep-seated fears, anger, self-hate, judgment, abhorrence and envy from others. I wonder, with all that ULOAH gave that weekend, did the sistahs get it? Will they apply the knowledge from the workshops they attended? Will they apply the principles and teachings? Will they make them a part of their lives?

ULOAH has given us the opportunity to embrace the journey. We must go through something to get somewhere. ULOAH gave us a place. A safe space, our own sacred space where no one can hurt, judge, penalize us for our feeling, views, and ethics. A place called SISTAHFest.

I asked a sistah who traveled all the way from England what brought her to SISTAHFest. She cheerfully said that she wanted to be surrounded by her sistahs. She wanted to know them, She said she came in search of a gathering for women where there were no drugs or alcohol. She wanted to finally find acceptance and come home.

[ULOAH can be reached via e-mail at ULOAH@aol.com or on the ULOAHline: 323.960.5051]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To Your Health

BODY APPRECIATION DAY

by Steven G. Fullwood

Yesterday, I called my body up and apologized. "Look, I know I've been running you ragged lately, and not paying you very much attention. It's been non-stop working, writing, exercising, cleaning, traveling and shopping for the past few months, without a single moment of rest. Whaddaya say we get together and share some down time? Just you and me."

My body was suspicious. "No making me walk 30 blocks for CDs or starving me to death to write just one more page?" answered my body.

"I promise," I said, "so can you get up and take a shower? We stink."

"Okay."

And that's how "Body Appreciation Day" began. Well, sort of.

If you're anything like me, and I suspect you are because you are so fabulous, you don't have a lot of time to rest, relax and rejuvenate. Correction: you don't make time to rest, relax and rejuvenate. Most of us have to pass out from exhaustion before we consider taking a break. If we're lucky, a caring friend might pull us aside and whisper, "uh, your hair is falling out, the circles under your eyes have circles, and you have no fingernails. Take a vacation."

Wouldn't it be great not to have to get to that point? Well then here's your chance! Give yourself a "Body Appreciation Day!"

This is a day where you indulge in an array of activities that allow you repose and peace. You might consider taking a stroll through a park, getting a massage or manicure, or all three. Personally I love a good meal, so slowly savoring and consuming healthy food at my favorite restaurant is a prime activity. A full-body massage and relaxing in a sauna is also delightful. So when I sit down to create a day just for me, I take into account these and other restorative activities. Then I look in my wallet. Hmmm.

Relax. Treating yourself to a "Body Appreciation Day" doesn't have to clean out your wallet. With a little creativity, your day of fun and leisure can be very cost efficient.

So, where do you begin? A great place to start is to determine what day of the week would be ideal for you. Then decide what you want to do. What makes you happy? Write it down. Resolve to spend the entire day pampering yourself. And be realistic. While the thought of several semi-naked foot servants feeding you pealed grapes might be appealing, it may not be within reach.

Here are some helpful tips:

Plan in advance. This way you can schedule several activities and have time to shop around for the best deals. Look in your local newspapers, magazines and on the Internet for coupons and special rates for services. Always keep an eye out for a good deal.

Schedule activities early in the day. This is your day. Take full advantage of it.

Talk to friends and family. Don't overlook this potentially rich resource of information about activities you may be interested in!

Choose a variety of activities. And don't be afraid to try something new! Be adventurous!

Get up early on that special day. Light a candle and say a little prayer. This exercise opens up the soul and starts your day off right. After all, having a body to appreciate is a blessing.

Take a nice long bath or shower.

Enjoy a nice cup of herbal tea. Personally, I like Yogi Teas. The Yogi Tea Company manufactures delicious beverage teas and medicinal herbal teas known as Ancient Healing Formulas, all based on the Ayurvedic Tradition from India.

Arrive early for your appointments. Strolling in 10 or 15 minutes after your scheduled appointment isn't making the most of your time. Get there early, and bring along reading material to enjoy.

Purchase services early, if possible. If not, pinch a little here and there to ease the strain on your finances.

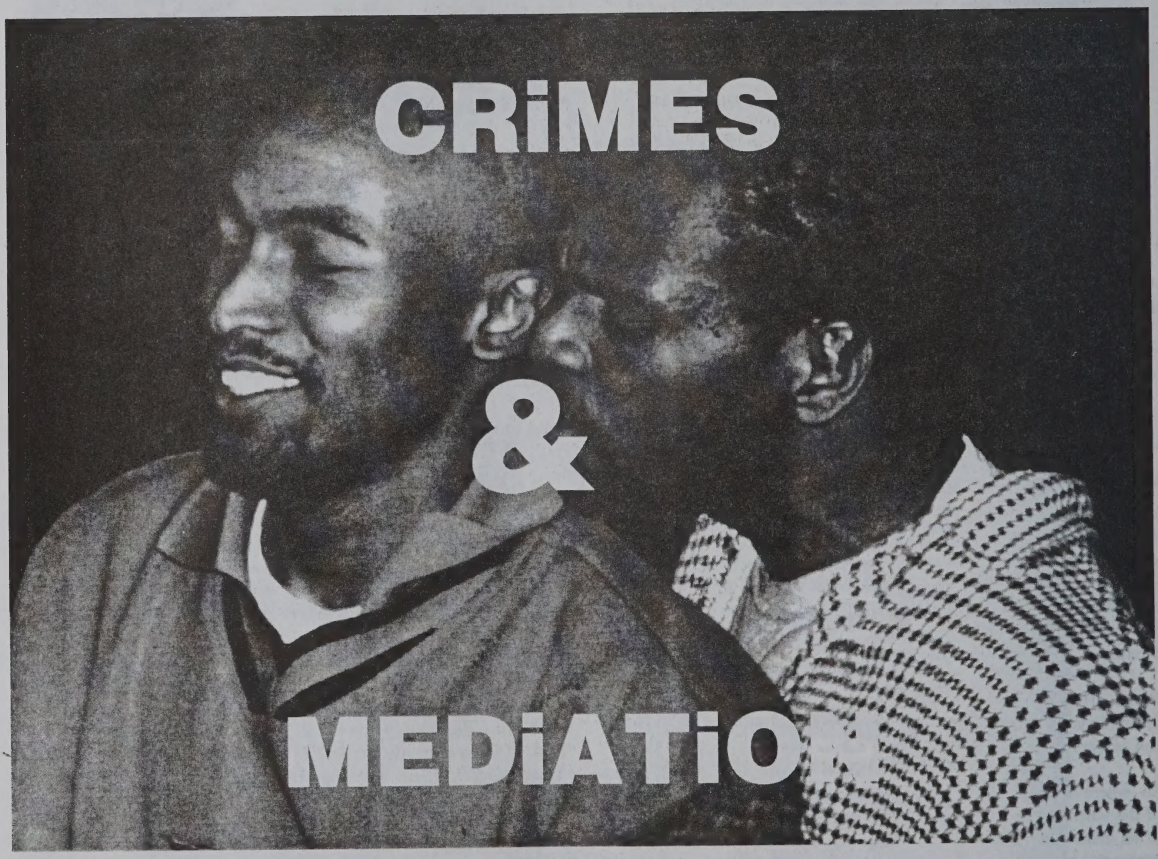
Relax and take a minute to breathe and reflect on the day's activities. The great thing about "Body Appreciation Day" is that you can always create the day you want! It can be simple or complex, cost-effective or a tad expensive (you deserve it!)

Here are some suggested activities:

*Get a nice, relaxing massage.
*Go to a park and study the beauty of nature.
*Take a nice leisurely swim.
*Purchase some nice flowers or a plant for your bedroom!
*Go sit by a large body of water and watch the waves go back and forth.
*Sit under a tree with a good book.
*Find a nice sauna or whirlpool.
*Pick up a pen or paintbrush and let the creative juices flow!
*Treat yourself to a movie or a play.
*Go sailing, roller blading or biking!
*Plan a picnic for one - or two!
*Plant a garden.

"Body Appreciation Day" can help you recognize your body as a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual expression of your life. When you feel out of balance and need a reprieve from life's everyday stresses, consider taking a day for yourself. After all, as I've said before, you deserve it!

If you need a little assistance planning a "Body Appreciation Day," please feel free to e-mail me at onestepfurther1@yahoo.com. I'd love to help you get started!



EXAMINING LOVE, MONEY & CO-DEPENDENCY

by Barry Simon

Leigh Mosely's photo of actors performing in Steve Langley's stageplay Gone Fishin'

'an was quiet and meticulous, living his life in utious measure. William lived on a grand ale, spending freely and moving unconscious- through a world of his own devising. Their urtship was a romantic's dream, the perfect raction of opposites. Except that Evan and illiam (not their real names) were not oppo- es. Rather, they were the disastrous coupling two people who were unfortunately "made r each other." The resulting mayhem was any- ng but romantic.

illiam was a thief and a liar, his anti-social havior dating back quite a few years. Nothing ajor, mind you. Mostly misdemeanors, start- g with schemes to wheedle money out of fam- members who knowingly participated. iat's called "enabling behavior."

ortly after he started dating Evan, William cessed his new lover's personal information iich gave him access to Evan's bank account.)wever, Evan discovered the crime almost mediately. Of course, he called the police and ormed the bank, right? And then he threw the m out. Well, that might be what the rest of us)uld have done (yes?), but Evan continued ting William. He did demand repayment, but ch time William failed to meet the deadline, 'an gave him another chance. That enable illiam to apologize profusely and, then, steal en more money behind Evan's back.

iere are people out there who need to be res- ed and there are people who need to be the scuer. Some people call this "love.")nsciously or unconsciously, the Williams and : Evans of the world know that the other will lfill their needs...kind of like a bee to pollen. iey complete each other. But the result is any- ng but sweet. So, Evan continued dating a an who had violated his trust, thereby giving illiam permission to continue doing to him iat he had done his whole life---stealing from)se who loved him.

ie violated bank account was just the begin- ig of an escalating array of fiscal crimes illiam perpetrated against his beloved. By the ne they reached the mediation table, William

d literally taken on Evan's financial identity, :ating a long list of debts in his lover's name d destroying Evan's credit rating in the)cess. While Evan had recently awakened to the extent of his boyfriend's criminal invasion of his life, hearing it painstakingly cataloged during the mediation left him nearly speechless. William had broken so many laws that he could easily face jail time...if Evan turned him in.

Still hoping to salvage their relationship, William used a "love defense", confessing how Evan was the only person with whom he had ever been this honest and, thereby, proving his love. And despite his admittedly despicable actions, he knew that Evan still loved him. It was clear that William was completely blind to how his crime had betrayed his lover. Still unclear, however, was Evan's ability to move past his own need and truly see the man sitting opposite him.

"Evan," I asked, "do you have an idea of how much money William stole from you?"

"Yes," he replied, sounding uncertain.

"How much?"

"Between 9 and 10." We are talking about thousands of dollars here. Now you would think if someone stole thousands of dollars from your bank account and your credit card, you would be quite sure---to the penny---how much was taken. Was Evan's equivocation a sign that William's love defense was working?

"Well, how much is it?" I pushed.

"Between 9 and 10," he repeated.

"Well," I said again, my voice becoming more firm as I leaned closer to him, "which is it? 9 or 10?"

I was forcing him to go where he did not want to go---to the truth. Not the factual truth. That was clear enough. I'm referring to the emotional truth, those needs deep inside that caused him to enable William's crimes. Would he use the opportunity of the mediation to open his eyes, brush aside his false expectations of his swindler lover and finally see the truth of their relationship? Or would he continue to make excuses to himself, rationalizing his own and William's actions so that they might still have some kind of intimate relationship?

Evan looked at me as if I was asking him to place a gun next to a loved one's head and pull the trigger. William watched from the other side of the table, his big brown eyes begging forgiveness. With great reluctance Evan said, "10." I could almost hear his false expectations falling to the floor, shattering.

Together William and Evan constructed an agreement that was a day by day scenario listing the dates and times by which William would repay Evan the money he owed him while repairing the credit damage he had done. If William failed to meet any of the deadlines, Evan would not let him off the hook as he had done in the past. This time he would finally contact the authorities.

Evan went on to reveal how he had left a work situation where he was called upon to help others all day long. "It was too exhausting," he admitted, "and now here I am in this situation again." Maybe it was karma. Maybe he needed this lesson one more time so he could finally admit, "I am co-dependent." During the mediation he was brought face to face with his own truth and now was ready to never play the "enabler" role again. Hopefully, his next relationship would produce something sweeter.

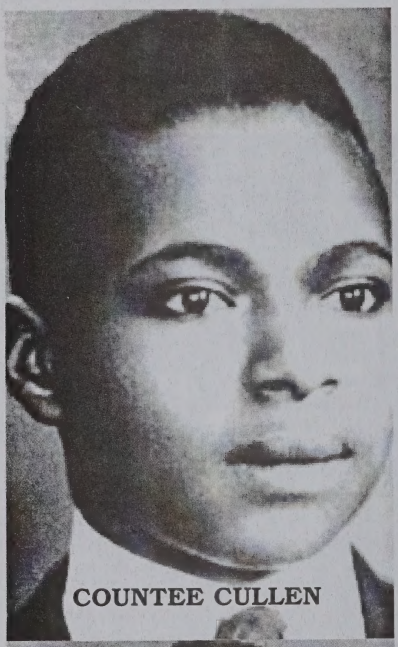
But beware. While Evan has recovered, William is still on the loose...along with the thousands of other Williams out there. They are looking for someone to rescue them, to "complete" the picture. If you think this is romantic, remember Evan and William. So-dependency isn't romantic. It sucks all the juice out of romance. In fact, it just sucks.

[Barry Simon is a private mediator in the Los Angeles area whose company is called Mediated Solutions. He is also on the panel of mediators for the Mosten Mediation Centers. He specializes in mediating relationship disputes for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities and encourages all couples to write a Living Together Agreement. He has created and conducted a workshop called "My Checkbook, My Lover, and Me" and has written a similarly titled booklet that helps couples begin the process of writing a Living Together Agreement. Barry can be reached at 818.752.8340 or via e-mail at sbarry@resolvenow.com. His website can be reached at www.resolvenow.com]

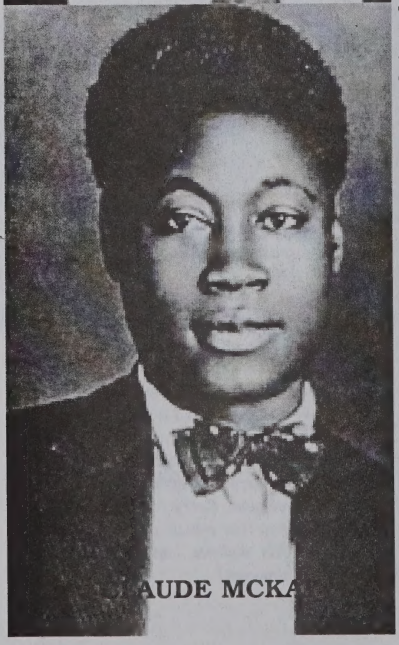
HooKeD oN BooKS

REVISITING THE RENAISSANCE: LITERARY FUEL FOR THE FUTURE

by Jason Michael



COUNTEE CULLEN



CLAUDE MCKA

When did it begin? How long did it last? And what did it really mean? You're bound to get a different answer from every individual you ask. Some have downplayed its significance through the years and dismissed it as a brisk period of breathless naivete that bound Black writers to an artistic standard managed by white publishers. Others laud the era as the birth of a new breed of black intellectualism that freed a generation.

Whether either definition is accurate there are at least a few facts that cannot be denied. It was the first time that Black intellectual thought, the stories, struggles and pains of a people, was packaged and distributed to a mass audience. White critics and consumers were not only hearing, but encouraging, if not exploiting, a new school of young, black writers.

What started as a debutante's ball of sorts, orchestrated by Alain Locke and designed to introduce such talented poets as Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes to a mainstream audience, resulted in the largest outpouring of black literary efforts to date. A waterfall of poetry, short stories, novels and plays poured forth and allowed a generation of Black voices to at last speak for themselves.

And what was downplayed, ignored and cleverly hidden in innuendo and subtle eroticism was the fact that a large number of these voices were gay. The fact that authors such as Cullen, Hughes, Claude McKay and Zora Neal Hurston actually had same sex affairs and can probably be best described as gay is not at all inconsequential when considering their writings. And often times their sexuality was there on the page inconspicuously illustrated for only the "trained" eye.

Like a coded bumper sticker, it only caught the attention of those who were looking for it. But it was there, in poems like "Heritage," "Tableau" and "For a Brown Boy" and in the heightened sensitivity of all the emotionally rich works they produced. The voices that were defining a generation, a generation coming of age in the 20th century, were homosexual. How remarkable!

Yet as every generation grows up an reaches middle age, their revolutionary ideals are outdated by new schools of thought. The poeticism of the Renaissance was rolled over by a new militancy fueled by the fiery battles of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Suddenly, the poems of a generation earlier seemed too quaint and cute for the current political climate.

But as the Civil Rights Movement was coming of age, there was another movement just being born. The Stonewall rebellion of 1969 spawned a new struggle for equality on the part of gays and lesbians. No longer was this group content to remain quiet behind closed doors and settle for the scraps of dignity afforded them. Encouraged and inspired by the crusade for civil rights, the gay rights movements was taking shape.

As it grew, so too did the number of voices willing to speak out about it. By the 80s there were already growing and vital gay and lesbian publishing houses. NAIAD and Alyson set the standards and by the end of the decade their success had proved to the mainstream publishing houses that there was a market for white gay literature.

Black, gay literature, however, was literally another story -- one that wasn't being told. A few anthologies eventually made it to the shelves and occasionally a novel by a Black, gay author would come along, but for many years such efforts were few and far between. Lesbian writers Audre Lorde and Pat Parker had passed on and minor movements in poetry and prose led by Assoto Saint and Essex Hemphill were abruptly halted by their AIDS related deaths in 94 and 95.

At the same time, however, something was stirring. It was a buzz created by a former computer salesman turned novelist named E. Lynn Harris. Initially self-published and sold out of his trunk, Harris' first novel, "Invisible Life,"

was picked up by publishing conglomerate Doubleday and released under their Anchor Books banner. Racking up numerous awards, and even an NAACP Image Award nomination, the book's success would serve as a sorely needed wake-up call to the publishing industry: "Guess what, folks! Black people read too, and especially Black, gay folks!

Soon after, Alyson Books released James Earl Hardy's "B-Boy Blues" to instant acclaim. Suddenly, there were two best-selling Africentric homosexual authors on the scene. The sequels to their debut novels dispelled any notions of the whole thing being just a fluke, and Harris and Hardy became legitimate literary stars. And then, from out of nowhere came the explosion.

Like a meteor shower raining down upon the earth, bookstores and shelves were flooded with a wealth of material written and published by Africentric homosexual writers, editors and intellectuals. There were more anthologies ("Shade" and "Go the Way Your Blood Beats"), poetry collections ("Last Rights" and Lyric: Poems Along Broken Road"), nonfiction ("One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America" and "The Truth That Never Hurts"), and a host of novels. And encouraged, at least in part, by Harris' self-publishing success story, an abundance of self-published authors and small publishing houses emerged (RedBone Press, Mirage Publishing, grapevinepress, Ishai Books and West Beach Books).

There was a real live movement forming and enough action taking place to cause Lisa C. Moore, founder of RedBone Press, to ponder in the pages of the Lambda Book Report whether a new renaissance was taking place. Author Alaric Blair ("The End of Innocence: A Journey Into the Life") believes this to be the case.

"In the past ten years more Black writers have published than in any time in literary history that I can recall," Blair said, stating that the relationship between this movement and the Harlem Renaissance is obvious. "The two movements birthed out of a need to express ourselves in artistic form."

Poet Marvin K. White thinks the modern Renaissance is just a continuum of the one started in Harlem. "It's a coming of age... The Harlem Renaissance was important because it documented what we knew up to that point and what our view of the word was from Harlem. [But] now, this movement is our view of the world today."

Still, G.B. Mann, author of "Low-Hanging Fruit," points out that there are distinct differences between the two movements. Today's black writers, for instance, are able to control the packaging and production of their works in ways that the Renaissance writers were not. Mann said that the success of this movement does not depend upon the praise of white critics.

"It is a renaissance which seeks not outside legitimization and acceptance but is a movement of affirmation in much the same way that the hip-hop community has created its own market and ethos," said Mann. "It is fueled by the ignorance of rich media and cultural institutions which have no clue about, interest in, or desire to affirm authentic expressions of who we are."

So it's almost like Harlem inside out, a grassroots effort invading an industry, instead of an industry capitalizing on a community. This movement isn't taking place merely in boardrooms of large publishing houses, but in the streets and clubs and coffeehouses of cities all across the country. And Detroit is very much among them.

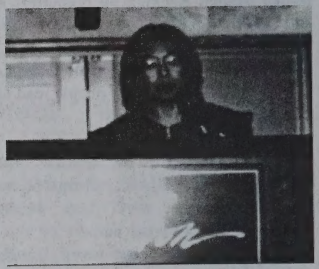
It should come as no surprise that creative energy is still bubbling over in Motown. Detroit Black Gay Pride President Johnny Jenkins knew there was still plenty of hidden talent to be mined here. Paralleling such groups as Speakfire in Atlanta and the Other Countries Collective in New York, Jenkins founded the In the Life Poetry Series four years ago.

Perhaps then, that is the key to this new renaissance and the relationship to it Harlem predecessor: they're both about community, about the telling of stories, the revelation of repressed truths and the sharing of passion and pain.

May those things never go out of style.

Alice Walker

on Audre Lorde, Labels and Bisexuality



Ms. Walker delivering key-note speech at 1997 NBLGLF Conference
photo by Ron Singleton

By Sidney Brinkley

Award winning novelist Alice Walker delivered the keynote address at the 1997 Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum's 10th Annual Conference in Long Beach, California. I was assigned to cover the conference for "The Washington Blade," D.C.'s gay newspaper. When I sent Walker the request for a n interview I sent along a copy of an 1984 interview that Audre Lorde had conducted for "Blacklight," the Black gay magazine I edited. At that time Alice Walker had just become famous and her picture appeared on the cover of the "New York Times Book Review." However, there was talk going around that Walker was a lesbian but when asked she always denied it.

In her "Blacklight" interview, which was conducted by writer Joseph Beam, Audre had said she was happy for Walker's success but she felt her insistence that she was not a lesbian had been "a real factor in her acceptability." In the context in which the remark was said, Audre came off a little peeved at Walker and a little envious of her success.

For years I had wondered how Alice Walker would respond to that rather unflattering comment, never dreaming I would actually get the opportunity to ask her. However, to my surprise, she graciously agreed to the interview and, of course, I asked her about Audre's comment.

"I thought it was the most strange thing I ever read," she replied. "It was one of those double things. She said she wished it was her but if it couldn't be her 'I was glad it was Alice,' on the other hand. Audre and I had to work some things through. She didn't like the fact that I called myself 'womanist.' She thought I was trying to get away from being a Black feminist." Though I had been forewarned that she could be cool and distant, Alice Walker was very charming the evening I met her and she forthrightly answered every question I put to her. She was in a hotel suite, sitting on a sofa next to poet/author/activist June Jordan, who never said a word.

There were perhaps a dozen people in the room at the time but I was totally unaware of their presence because I was focused on her and she was looking at me very intently. It was only afterwards that I would become somewhat overwhelmed by the experience.

By the time we met, Alice Walker had already "come out," and I asked at what point did she realize she was Bisexual? She answered she did not like the labels of "Lesbian," "Gay," or even "Bisexual," because she found them limiting.

"I always felt that if I loved someone, I could make love to that person," she said. "I've always found it difficult to 'fix' myself with a word or label. It would limit my freedom. And to me, freedom is the most important thing. Freedom is the most sensual thing."

Walker said she had come out to her family as soon as she realized her attraction to other women.

"I feel very strongly that as soon as you find something new and wonderful about yourself, you should just tell your people," she said. "My favorite brother died recently. He was very much the 'Archie Bunker' type. I have a lot of brothers and they're all rednecks and it was such a delight to tell him that I had fallen in love with a woman and to watch him kind of...pause. He started to smile because he didn't 'get it.' His brain didn't catch up to what I had just said and that smile dropped and he just sat there for a few minutes.

"But he loved me. He loved me silly from the time I was born. So, what was he gonna do? To the people that we love, I think the greatest gift we can give is to be who we are, as we find out who we are, right or wrong. That is the greatest gift.

"That was my moment of what it would be like to be face-to-face with the person I most care about. Actually, you don't care what most people think about you. But my brother...I loved him and what was he going to say? I wanted him to still love me."

In her speech the following day she again referred to her dislike of labels as she spoke of the "Decolonization of the Spirit." "What does Decolonization of the Spirit mean to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or two-spirited people? It means we begin to realize we must surrender our autonomy to no one. Though we might exist in loving solidarity with others, in fact, we have a one-on-one relationship with life. We learn that labels can be boxes that eventually cramp both the body and the soul. We begin to think, feel and comprehend the way we did before colonization forced us away from common sense. We know in our hearts that if we liberate our spirits, our sexuality, like our love itself, will follow with joy."

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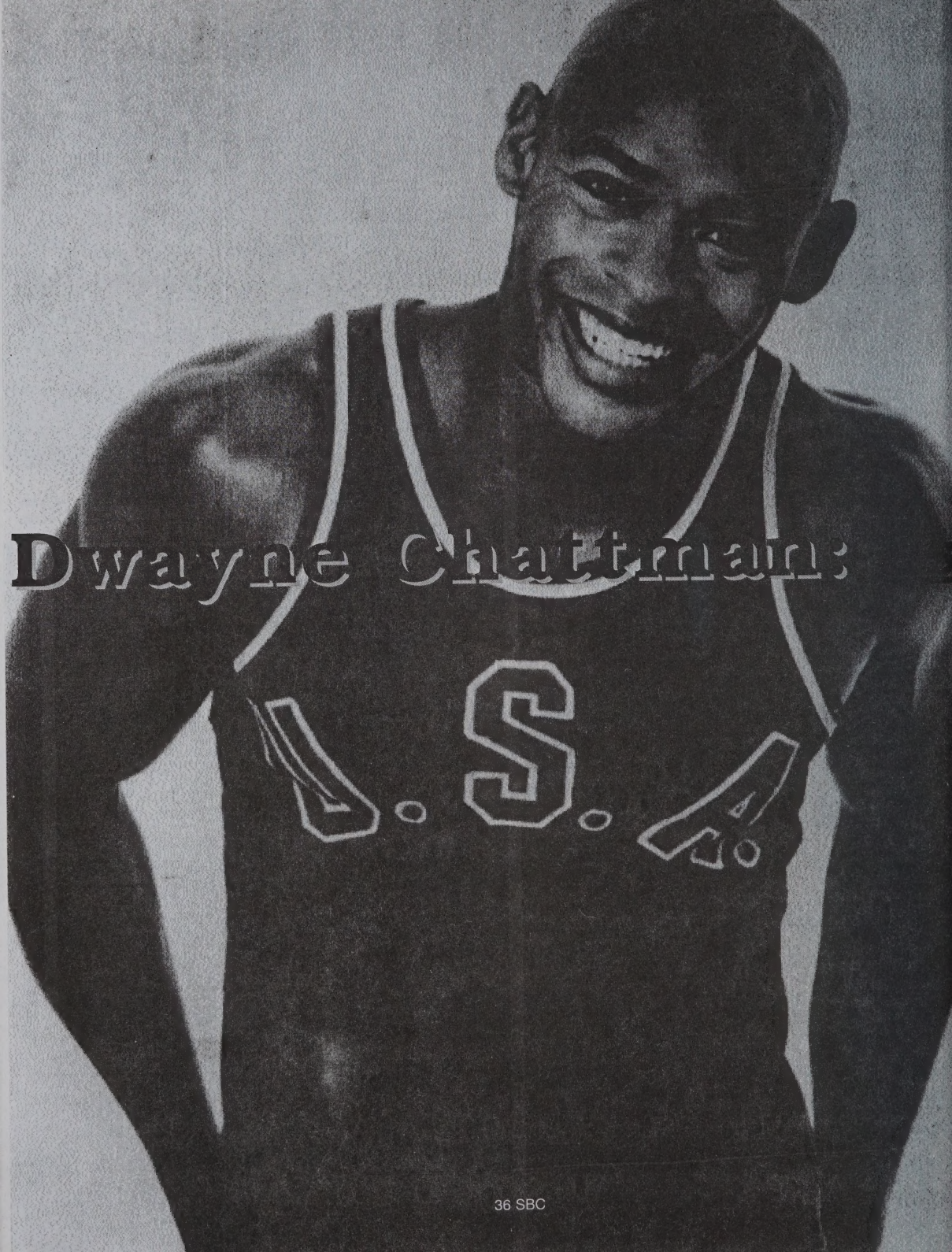
Dwayne Chattman
U.S.A.

g FAME to pick and choose

by Stanley Bennett Clay

I finally caught up with Ohio born actor/singer/dancer Dwayne Chattman over the phone in his New York hotel room early one morning. It had been a grueling but invigorating experience for the young, triple-threat thesp who has the awesome responsibility and talent-engendered privilege to resurrect bad-boy Leroy Johnson---renamed Tyrone Jackson---in the touring stage version of the classic film musical *Fame*.

Although he graciously denied that I woke him up, the sleep in his voice---or maybe the rigors of last night's stage performance---were evident.

"We're suppose to be playing "Rent" today," he laughed with a drowsy hoarseness that could not detach itself from it's dripping sexuality. His warm manner and easy demeanor had not changed one bit

over the years since we used to run into each other at the clubs here in L.A. or at inside industry parties and receptions where actors, producers, writers and directors let their hair down, knowing that the often indiscreet press was not on the guest list. Our relationship was one of distant regard and respect, kind words and mentions related through mutual friends.

A conversation with this graduate of the famed Goodman School of Drama in Chicago is a conversation with an artist that is driven. Knowing that competition is as important to the actor as it is to the athlete, it was of no surprise that the cast of *Fame* and the cast of *Rent*, the other big Broadway heavily-'colored' musical, would be duking it out on the softball field later that afternoon. Dwayne's biggest regret was that he would not be on the field, but in the bleachers, thanks to a strained muscle brought on by one of the gymnast-type leaps employed in the choreography of the show he now headlines.

Dwayne has come a long way from dancing in the background of the TV show *Fame* and now starring in 40-plus city tour of the stage version. In between came jobs in such stage hits as *A Chorus Line* and *The Wiz*, as well as featured roles in such films as *Virtuosity* opposite Denzel Washington.

Here's a brother with a master plan. Work your ass off now. Pick and choose later. Works for me.

SBC: What's the hardest thing about being on tour?

Dwayne: Trying to stay healthy. Going from city to city. Trying to keep your body together because you know I like to work out and stuff and it's very difficult. We're doing more than 40 cities. But I really want to get back to L.A. A lot of casting people and a lot of directors want to see me. And it would be cool to get back on television, but, like we talked about last time, they're really shady with a lot of the roles now. They're not letting a lot of young Black people get these roles now. So, I had to figure out how to work because they weren't letting anybody in except for the rappers and the comedians. A lot of the young actors weren't working.

SBC: So if you had your choice would you be doing film or television?

Dwayne: Probably film, but you know, God works in mysterious ways. I mean, I can still dance, but I'm not going to be able to do that forever, so it's cool that I'm able to utilize it now.

SBC: Having gone from being one of the background players in the TV series *Fame* to being in the lead role; that has to be some-what of a head-spinner for you.

Dwayne: I'm always studying the acting, but when I first moved to California, dancing was the only way for me to get income. I started off doing a lot of dancing---videos and television shows. And then I went on to acting and other things like musicals.

SBC: What would you say distinguishes your performance from that of Gene Anthony Ray, who created the role of Leroy in the film?

Dwayne: Wow. The character is somewhat the same, but I've added a lot more dimension to the character. He's a lot more sensitive. Now, of course, I liked what Gene Anthony Ray did, but

in the stage show the singing is more vocally challenging and the dancing is more athletic.

SBC: I remember you used to do some modeling. Are you still into that?

Dwayne: Every now and then. Hey, I do everything in this business. If it pays the bills I do it. Remember *L.A. Style Magazine*?

SBC: Right, right.

Dwayne: That's when I started doing print things. I've been at this show-biz thing since I was 12 years old; a long time.

SBC: Hey, I know you're not going to tell me your real age. I haven't run into an actor yet who'll do that. But you've been out there for at least ten years.

Dwayne: (laughing) Probably a whole lot longer than that.

SBC: Homosexuality is very prevalent in the world of entertainment. What do you think is happening in regards to acceptance?

Dwayne: You know they don't accept it. I think it's more accepted in the white community. It ruins a lot of Black people's careers.

SBC: You think, still?

Dwayne: Oh yeah. Yeah. Not a lot of white people like Ellen or Elton John. It's okay for them.

SBC: Do you think that that's what hurt Gene Anthony Ray's career?

Dwayne: Partly. And then, in this business, you have to be nice. You can't be nasty to people. I mean, you never know who you're talking to. You gotta be humble. People look at all that.

SBC: Now when you look at someone like George C. Wolfe, arguably the most powerful individual in American Theatre right now as the Artistic Director of *The New York Shakespeare Festival* and *The Public Theatre*, and very proudly open as an African American homosexual, also you look at someone like Paris Barclay, Executive Producer of *NYPD Blue* and Emmy Award-winning television director, another brother who is fiercely open about his homosexuality, and in several magazine and newspaper articles, even as a cover story in SBC, he talks about the power of his same gender loving pride and freedom within the construct of Hollywood---in light of this and the fact that the motion picture and television industry, not to mention live theatrical, is run by homosexuals.

Dwayne: White, gay, Jewish homosexuals. Still, a lot of people's careers are ruined---Black people. I know tons of people in the industry who just won't come out. It's sad, because we're all God's children and it shouldn't matter if you're gay, Black or white, it shouldn't matter. It doesn't matter. I think it's so stupid. I mean, why do people care how Whitney Houston is? I just wanna hear her sing. They're so bad with that and it really bothers me.

SBC: So are you saying that there's a need to have a certain guardedness?

Dwayne: You have to. It's unfortunate, but what can you do?

SBC: What do you see in the future in regards to a person in this industry being able to be him or herself?

Dwayne: I see it around the corner. People are becoming more open, but it's not changing fast enough. It's just like racism. They say 'Oh, there's a change!' You see a little change, but not much.

SBC: What kind of effect does being on tour have on your romantic life?

Dwayne: My state of mind right now is all about the business and making it happen; getting to that next level. The other thing will always be there. And I'm a loner anyway, so it's okay.

SBC: What is the next level for you?

Dwayne: Being able to pick from any vehicle---Broadway, television, film---is what I want. I want to be able to pick and choose. That's the level I want to get at. That's very important for me. I think if you work hard enough then you can get it. I've been able to do things in the past that I didn't think I'd be able to do, but if you work hard enough and concentrate and start putting yourself first, it's a lot easier to get there. You have to be selfish to a certain extent, know what I'm saying? I'm only speaking from personal experience. I don't know if that's the way to do it for everybody. It's what works for me. And be nice. You have to be nice to people. You can't be an ass. It's so important. Reputation is so important. That's what Lena Horne said: 'You have to be nice, you can't be nasty.'

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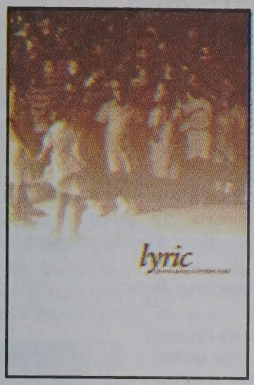

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There are those of us who record
The emotional, the social, the spiritual
Of the histories.
We are like wooden horses
Ridden and scarred by the many children
Who have by strange turns touched our lives.
Physically, we do not move of our own volition;
There are ropes tethered to us.
Which are tied to the greater cycle of things.
The coming, goings and returnings.
Thoughts transport us metaphysically among experiences
Such that we have seen the sun from the moon
And have lain dead in our master's trammels,
Though we have not moved from this place.
We are open as a window
To receive the breeze, smell the aroma
Of those worlds around and inside us.
Like huts built of granite, we persist
Though the village that was dies
As we watch and transcribe.
Our eyes view beyond their vision:
They absorb, taste blood
They scream when our sister's are dreaming.
We have souls that remember,
Skin that recalls,
Voices that sing across the aegis of lives
So that in the end
God will remember
How we
Happened.

In Paperback October 1999

Low-Hanging Fruit
G. B. Mann
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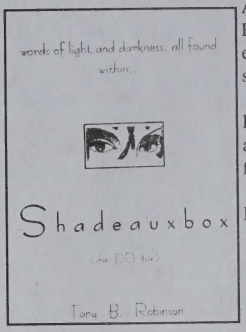
BooK ReVieWS

SHADEAUXBOX by Tony B. Robinson
Shadeauxworks
P.O. Box 3192
Durham NC 27715-3192
Reviewed by Stanley Bennett Clay



A fresh talent enters the scene with a bold cool in the embodiment of Tony B. Robinson. Deceptive simplicity is part of the adept art expressed in this brother's poetic raps that ripple with the ring of whispers and smoke rings and slow acoustic jazz in a basement beat joint.

His poems are, for the most part, same gender loving relationship oriented, and he deals with the age old ups and downs with pragmatic maturity---no flowery sonnets up in here---and an uncruel cut-the-crap efficiency.

In *closing curtain*, he states, almost a-matter-of-factly:

No words part our lips
So it has come to this
In the words of local informants
We gave quite a performance
Awards worthy of all

Even in self-examination Robinson maintains a clear-headed healthiness. Notice *kinetic:*

change is good every now and then
cleans the slate for new game, so i think i'll let it in
and begin where the common
seems to have brought about my end
it's inevitable i'll rouse a few heads
as i walk on water across the Pacific
but it's not so simplistic to tally the consequence
how many times that voice mars my confidence
i abide by the heart so i speak in my defense

Robinson tries unconvincingly a little blues cryin' *with get me down*, but cryin' the blues just ain't his thing. His poetry walks through the storm with it's head held high and a cool-ass strut in it's step. Quite simply, Tony B. Robinson's poetry soars. And this small collection---30 pages---is a winner.

DETACHED by Lorenzo C. Robertson
(Ishai Books
709 East Caracas Street
Tampa FL 33603-2328
$14)
Reviewed by Richard C. Jones

Have you ever thought you knew someone who exuded sexuality, confidence, stability and success? Have you taken an introspective look at yourself and didn't like what you saw?

If you answered no to both of these questions, then you need to pick up a copy of Lorenzo C. Robertson's debut novel, *Detached.* Set in the summer of 1988, Robertson creates a sexy graphic depiction of one man's descent into his own sexual abuse and cocaine abyss, and his eventual ascension from the depths of depression and loneliness in his main character, Jon Knight.

At one point or another, we have all done something in excess to overcompensate for what we lack in our lives. *Detached* forces readers to peel away the layers we attempt to mask with those excesses.

As he introduces other characters in this retro chronicle, readers are sure to recognize themselves or others in this saga of a decade gone by.

Whether we like it or not, Robertson forces us to take an up close and personal look at what we all want in our lives and the sometimes dangerous detours we take to claim it. *Detached* is a painful, revealing and realistic look at all that glitters, that isn't gold! And it serves to remind us, although at times we stumble, to pick ourselves up and continue toward the light, the truth about who we are, enriching ourselves as we continue the journey.

THE BEST MAN by Dwayne Carter
(Ishai Books
709 East Caracas Street
Tampa FL 33603-2328
$14)
Reviewed by Richard C. Jones

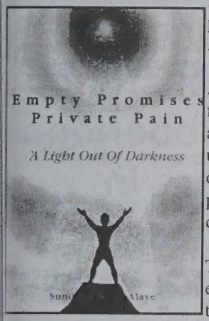
Imagine Guess Who's Coming to Dinner with a same gender-loving relationship and a best friendship as an appetizer, And what do you get, complications aplenty in Dwayne Carter's first effort, *The Best Man.*

The Atlanta native spins a tale centering around Rick Stanley and his partner Rashaan and the impending visit from Rick's best friend, Tony. Carter weaves an intricate story that begins to unravel when Rick doesn't tell Tony that he and Rashaan are more than "just roommates." Readers will turn pages trying to keep up with Rick's deceit and deception , wondering how long this charade can continue. Readers will also take bets out on how long Rashaan will withhold his 'good lovin' from his partner.

The Best Man explores the truth about ourselves that we sometimes refuse to reveal to those who are especially close to us. Carter's twists and turns make for an enjoyable read reminding us that the truth will set you free.

EMPTY PROMISES PRIVATE PAIN - A LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS
by Sundiata Najja Alaye'
(Moyo Press
621 Cabot Court Suite 201
Memphis, TN 38103
$15.95)
Reviewed by Stanley Bennett Clay

There is much to be admired in this informative but somewhat presumptuous self-help book by D.C.-based lecturer Sundiata Najja Alaye'. It addresses many of the questions that many of us as Black homosexual and bisexual men have, consciously or unconsciously, asked ourselves: What if my family finds out? Why is this lifestyle so complicated? Where is Mr. Right if there is a Mr. Right? Why are brothers so sexual? Why can't I be happy with one person, or myself? I've lost too many friends to AIDS! What do I do If I am HIV positive? How am I supposed to live with AIDS?



Alaye' is generous with the details of his own failed relationship and ultimate fall into a negative state, and though he has survived to document his resurrection from a spiritual demise, the baggage clings tightly to his new philosophies, often resorting to advise that can do more harm than good.

Though he claims not to be a prude, that is exactly what he is as he suggests, no demands, that loveless sex is bad, your ego is your enemy (p.165) and the answers to all of our problems----he has determined that all of us are in one way or another fucked up---can only be found in the dogma of Western Christian religion.

Most disturbing is Alaye's belief that unconditional love and support of one's partner includes aiding and abetting his life of lies when it comes to family and friends. Alaye' states: "Accepting people as they are brings us peace. So if that means that you have to "dehomonize" the house (moving into the guest room, hiding pictures, photo albums, magazines, and videos) as many of us do when family or friends visit, do it! Brotha Alaye', if that's how you want to live your life, if that's how you live your life, then God bless you, but to encourage this kind of self-hating, self-loathing behavior in the name of self-help is down right irresponsible.

I wanted so much to love this book as our community needs words of healing, of rejuvenation; affirming words, even words of painful constructive criticism, words of good hard love---and there are some truly informative and helpful moments within these pages (Exercise 12---Exit With Love, offers helpful and positive instructions on healing after a relationship has ended), but *Empty Promises Private Pain* contains an overwhelming amount of chaff that tends to choke the wheat at the very roots.

Example: Alaye's reason for suggesting we wait 90 days before having sex with a person we're getting to know has something to do with comparing the experience to a 90 day probation period on a new job. This rather ludicrous advise, like so much advise related to sex in this book, hints at what I suspect is a disdain of a beautiful gift a Greater Power has given man, animal and plant life. The gift of sex in all its varying expressions.

Sundiata Alaye' says it's time for a healing, and yes indeed it is, but I always thought healing came from self-loving, self nurturing, and self-care, not, as this book inadvertently suggests, from self-denial and self-flagellation.

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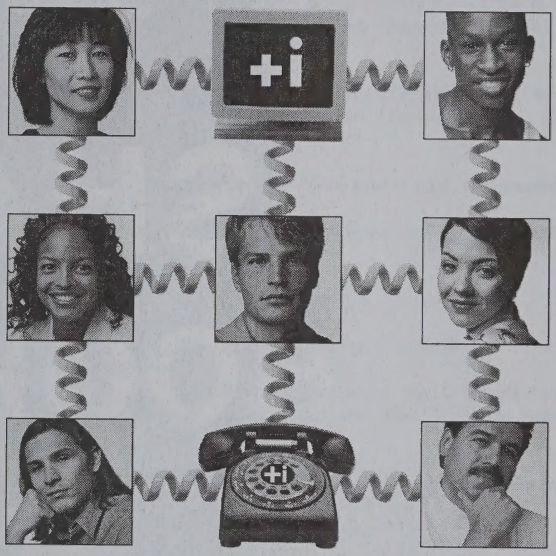

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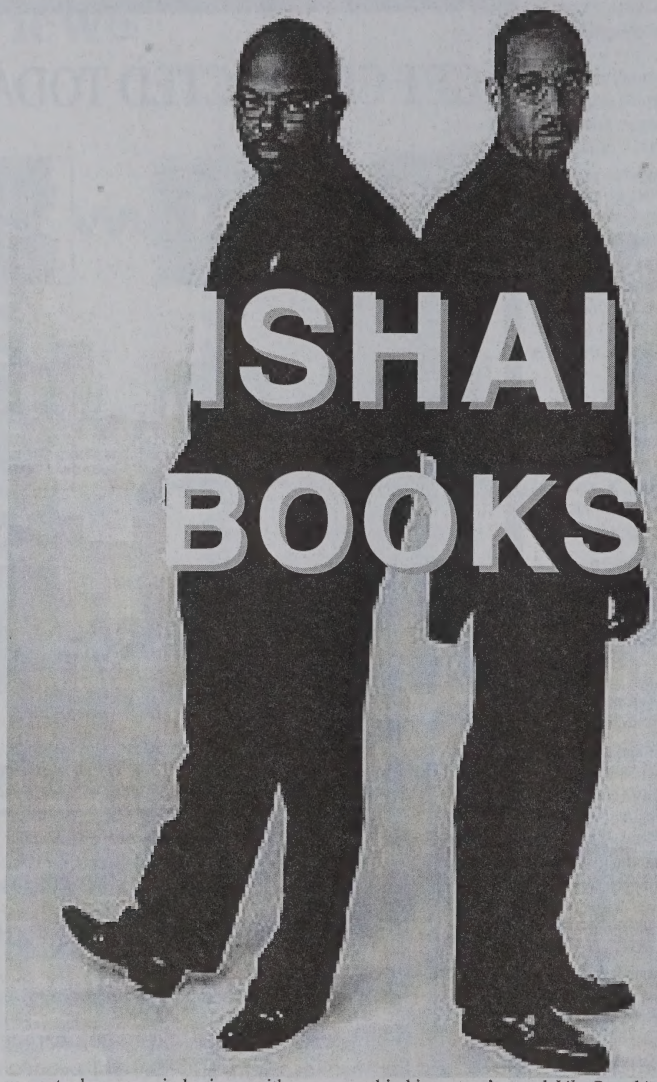


Publishers Ricc Rollins and Lorenzo Robertson Partners in Business Partners in Love

by Richard C. Jones

What do you get when you mix business with pleasure? A business that is built on and strengthened by the love of it's two owners Ricc Rollins and Lorenzo C. Robertson, authors and proprietors of Ishai Books, a Tampa, Florida-based publishing house .

Ricc, author of the novel *Like Breathing*, is an award-winning talk show host, ordained minister and former columnist for the Tampa Tribune. Lorenzo, from the small town of Statesboro, Georgia, was a radio announcer, public director, case manager and vocational counselor for a number of years before turning his efforts to the written word. His poetry first appeared in his partner's novel *Like Breathing*. He is the author of his novel, *Detached*. Recently, I sat down with the literary duo to talk with them about being partners both in life and business.

Richard: After nearly three years of romantic involvement and being entrepreneurs, how has being so intricately linked affected your personal and professional relationships?

Ricc: I think that it has brought us closer together. It's not bad or good, it just is. We are a team and (even if, God forbid) we broke up tomorrow, I know that we would still be great friends.

Lorenzo: I think that it has actually enhanced and strengthened the bond in everything thing that we do and are. It's not about him or me, it's about us.

Richard: Being business and romantic partners, what are some of the best and worst qualities you two have brought out in one another

Ricc: We both have stirred up the creative and adventurous side in each other. We're willing to take risks on projects and having someone that believes in and supports me gives me extra

motivation to try if nothing else.

Lorenzo: Ditto.

Richard: As authors, has you partnership spilled over into your books?

Ricc: I think so, there are some moments of our lives that I put in *Like Breathing,* partially because I thought it worked but to also chronicle the relationship that I have with Lorenzo.

Lorenzo: Same here, Ian & Jon's (two of the characters in *Detached*) relationship is somewhat reminiscent of us.

Richard: What is the one item that you have received from each other that you treasure the most and why?

Ricc: A pocket watch on our first year anniversary, it was a total surprise and I cherish it because it came from him. But he's also given me the strength to be me and love me unconditionally, that's the greatest gift.

Lorenzo: A camera for my birthday that we spent together as a couple, I mentioned in passing months before and there it was. He uses it more than I do, but then again he's becoming quite the photographer.

Richard: Of the two of you, who is more home shopping and who is more home improvement?

Ricc: I'm both...

Lorenzo: I'm neither, but will step up to the challenge.

Richard:Who is the more apt to give in or stand you your ground in an argument?

Ricc: I think that it's more seventy percent me and thirty percent him.

Lorenzo: Nope, it's fifty fifty.

Richard: Do you have pet names for each other?

Ricc: No, Lorenzo doesn't like pet names, occasionally I call him "Z" but no one else calls him that (except for my mother), he's not into nick names.

Lorenzo: He's Ricc and that's what I call him (except for the occasional baby or honey).

Richard: How do you want to spend New Year's Eve 1999?

Ricc: In church, with here at my home church or at Trinity United Church in Chicago with my mentor and favorite pastor, Dr. Jeremiah Wright, the man is a preacher's preacher.

Lorenzo: I want to be at some awesome party in Manhattan with all sorts of happenings going on.

Richard: Finish this sentence, Nobody knows that I...

Ricc: Collect Black Barbie Dolls and Annie Lee Collectables.

Lorenzo: I use to Eskimo Kiss (rubbing noses) but then again I haven't done that since fourth grade.

Richard: Was it love at first sight?

Ricc: For me it was love at first sight, a mutual friend introduced me to this cute guy wearing braces and I knew from the moment we spoke that I wanted to be with him for the rest of my life.

Lorenzo: We were like Dharma and Greg. We didn't date, we just jumped into a relationship.

Richard: What gets on your nerves about one another?

Ricc: He's very analytical about everything, there always has to be a reason why... it can never just be.

Lorenzo: Exactly, his not excepting that there is cause and effect.

Richard: What prompted to write your respective novels?

Ricc: (I've told this story before) There was a guy in our BrothasSpeak meeting that made a comment that he would never love himself as long as he was gay and knew that no one else would love him either. And I wanted him (and others like him) to know and honor their truths and be without all the drama.

Lorenzo: *Detached* was something that I always want to write, my characters weren't idealistic. They are people with vices and flaws, everyday folks.

Richard: Who inspired you to write?

Ricc: E. Lynn Harris. when I met Lynn in '94, I shared with him that I wanted to write and he told me to"just do it." It was several years later, but I did write the books and I know that if he (along with James Earl Hardy and the countless others) hadn't paved the way, I wouldn't be here to day. So I thank them publicly.

Lorenzo: And Ricc inspired me by "just doing it!"

Richard: What is something that surprised you about each other?

Ricc: He's an avid country music fan.

Lorenzo: His personality changes drastically when he becomes agitated. Talk about mood swings (laughing).

Richard: If you could spend one day as your partner, what three things would you make sure to do that day?

Ricc: That's a very good question, but I wouldn't want to be him, I like being me.

Lorenzo: Same here , I agree wholeheartedly.

Richard: Who is more apt to go with the flow or plan?

Ricc: I live to plan, I like structure

Lorenzo: And I go with the flow.

Richard: What advice would you give couples thinking that who want to go into business together?

Ricc: Be willing to make a commitment to the vision, communicate and be prepared to sacrifice.

Lorenzo: Make sure that its a common goal and not one vision over the other. Richard: How will readers find out about what Ishai Books has in store for Fall?

Ricc: They can always visit our website at www.ishaibooks.com.

Lorenzo: And, checking out their local bookstores and emailing us at IshaiBooks@aol.com

Richard: What projects are you currently working on?

Ricc: Well, the sequel to *Like Breathing*, Breathe Again is due out October '99 and...

Lorenzo: I have my first book of poetry, eclectic essence coming out as a part of our fall book list.

Richard: What else is on the list?

Ricc: We have three new novelist debuting, *The Men's Room* by Michangelo Scruggs, *When the Children Get Together* by R. Bryant Smith and *Discretion* by Sharon Patton.

Lorenzo: And *The Best Man* by Dwayne Carter is still delighting readers around the country. So there's plenty to read.

GAYE ADEGBALOLA and her BITTER SWEET BLUES

by Marc Lipkin photo by Marc Norberg

Singer/songwriter/vocalist/guitarist Gaye Adegbalola's musical roots run deep. As a founding (and current) member of *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women*, Gaye not only rediscovered the blues she first met as a child, she put her stamp on them, helping grow Saffire from local sensation to international phenomenon. Now with her first solo album, *Bitter Sweet Blues*, Gaye Adegbalola reaches deep onto her past and creates a musical statement for today and for the future.

Produced by blueswoman Rory Block (who also adds her intense slide guitar and background vocals on half of the albums tracks), *Bitter Sweet Blues* features eight Gaye originals ranging from haunting to joyful, plus songs by Keb' Mo', Smokey Robinson , Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey and Gaye's primary inspiration, Nina Simone.

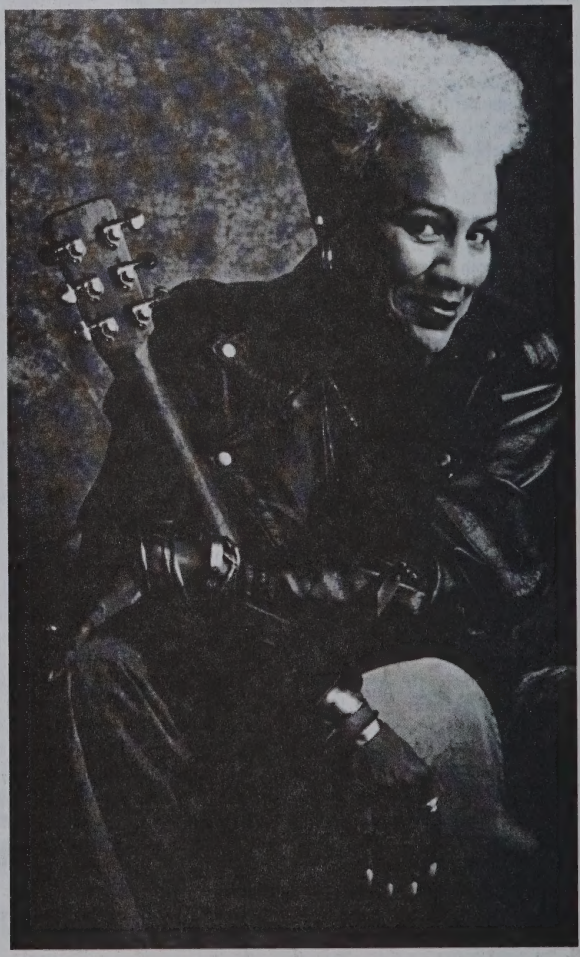
The roots of Gaye's blues background were planted the day she was born in the small, segregated town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1944. Her parents, both community leaders, also held a deep love of music. Her father, a part-time jazz musician, was the first Black school board member in Fredericksburg. Her mother always brought home the old records when the jukebox was changed at the Youth Canteen where she worked. Gaye played flute in her high school band and was chosen for the all-state band three separate years. After her first job (sorting dirty laundry for forty-five cents an hour), Gaye's interest in the burgeoning civil rights movement began. She participated in many sit-ins and pickets during the 1960s after graduating from high school as valedictorian in 1961. During her teen years and throughout college, Gaye listened to music and danced every chance she had. "I would dance all night long to Chuck Berry, James Brown, Etta James, Ray Charles, The Shirelles, Ruth Brown, Ike and Tina Turner," she recalls, "These artists shaped my musical taste." As she got older, she developed a love of gospel and then jazz and eventually found Nina Simone. "Nina led me to Bessie Smith.And I've never turned back. The blues roots of jazz became very clear to me."

While at college in New England, Gaye first learned a few chords on a guitar she bought from her roommate. Moving to New York, she became militant and changed her name to Adegbalola, a Nigerian name meaning "I'm reclaiming my royalty." She participated in a political determination organization in Harlem in 1966 and became active in the Black Power movement, leading protests and singing political songs.

After returning to Fredericksburg in 1970, Gaye was a director of the theater group Harambee 360 Degrees and often acted in the productions. She worked as a biochemical researcher and bacteriologist before teaching 8th grade science from 1971 through 1987, and was honored as Virginia State Teacher of the Year in 1982. In 1984, Gaye, along with her friend and guitar teacher Ann Rabson, formed *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women,* releasing their self-produced cassette on their own label in 1987. Gaye hit the road full-time to tour with the band in 1988, and then signed with Alligator Records in 1989. *Saffire* quickly went from playing local clubs to entertaining thousands at concert halls and festivals all over the world, winning praise everywhere they went. Gaye's song, *Middle Aged Blues Boogie*, earned the W.C. Handy Award (the Grammy of the blues community) for Song Of The Year in 1990.

As Gaye's---and *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women's*---popularity grew over the course of six albums, Gaye, already a blues lover, dove even deeper into the music she loved, absorbing songs and history as well as vocal and songwriting techniques. She conducts workshops on blues vocals, blues history and women's blues all over the country. She even released an instructional video, *Blues Vocal Techniques*, available on Homespun Tapes. And in the little spare time she has, Gaye also sits on the Steering Committee of the Blues Music Association, a trade organization she helped to found. With the release of *Bitter Sweet Blues*, Gaye adds another highlight to her already impressive career.

With *Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women* as popular as ever, the new solo album and constant touring, Gaye Adegbalola's musical career is in full swing. From her earliest childhood memories to her rocking teen years to her political and social leanings, Gaye Adegbalola's *Bitter Sweet Blues* captures all of her influences together in a perfectly conceived collection. "In the blues Gaye found her voice and discovered a way to infuse humor into pain," said *Blues Review*. Her performances are a powerhouse of emotion." Indeed, the power and emotion of Gaye Adegbalola infuses into *Bitter Sweet Blues* is that of a woman who knows what she wants and knows just how to sing, dance, think, laugh and shout out to get it.



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iN TuNe

music review by Erik Aston

photo by Michael Comte

NATALIE COLE

With The London Symphony Orchestra
THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS
[Elektra Entertainment]

No matter how gloriously and festive my Christmas is, it is never complete until I hear the melodious voice of the late Nate King Cole crooning "The Christmas Song". As always the song conjures warm and distant memories of snowy Christmas mornings in Chicago with my brothers and me around our gift-laden tree and steaming mugs of Hershey's hot chocolate and melted marshmallows. I can still hear our laugher as our mother replayed the song through out the morning.

This year for being a good boy, I was rewarded with yet another poignant duet of Grammy winning Natalie Cole and her late father Nat 'King' Cole singing my inspiring Christmas classic. It has been said time and time again, that one should never 'mess' with the classics, for they stand alone in their beauty, grace and timelessness. Natalie has dared to crossed this line, not once, but twice before with astounding successes with her father's recordings, and now that the lady has ventured into that most sacred realm yet again, we, the listening audiences, are once more blessed with a classic duet from this gifted father/daughter team. Ms. Cole surely must be thanking the heavens for the wonders of technology.

With this CD, "The Magic of Christmas", Natalie brings a new elegance to more of her Christmas favorites. It's a brilliant follow up to her last holiday offerings "Holly and Ivy". This time Ms. Cole and award winning producer Fred Salem have added the lush and sweeping sounds of The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bob Krogstad. The highlights include a breathtaking arrangement of "O Tanenbaum" and a beautiful "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". Natalie's voice has grown richer throughout the years and the maturity reveals itself like the brilliance of a DeBeer's diamond.

Cole takes a swinging swipe at the holiday standard "The Twelve Days of Christmas" that made me sit up and take notice, for truly it is the one Christmas song I could hate. Thank God Ms. Cole shares my point of view on the song and reaches for the fun and hilarity buried within this old chestnut.

Her gospel approach to "Mary, Did You Know" will have you rocking back and forth as it becomes a testament to the art of the old Negro spiritual. Cole makes it a triumph and a joy to listen to. "My Grown-Up Christmas List" highlights Natalie at her most sincere. Her voice grows even more beautiful and the lyrics more profound by her phrasing on "Sweet Little Jesus Boy". Natalie Cole's vocal talent and discriminating taste have served her well for almost three decades. This new CD only compliments an already illustrious career and should be a must for our holiday list. Buy one for yourself and for somebody you love.

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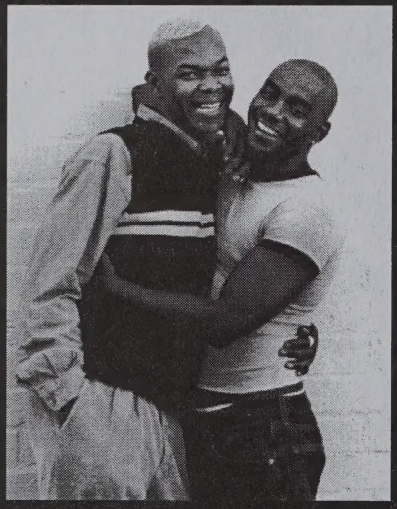

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MaN oN FiLM

by
Sergio W. Willis

It was so hot that Friday afternoon. Yet there I stood, sipping away on a cup of coffee as the sun mercilessly beat down on me.

I stood beside my good friend Lenon Partridge (no relation to you-know-who), observing a film crew. Lenon had some connections in the industry, so he'd arranged for the two of us to watch the filming of a big-budget action flick. I felt somewhat unnerved, watching how technical the whole film-making process was. Being in film class, having the instructor explain things to you, is one thing. Actually seeing that shit in action is a little scary.

In the beginning, it didn't look as if I would see much of anything. This was a letdown, being my first visit to a set. Things got interesting, though, when I caught a glimpse of the picture's star. He was a pretty well-known rapper. Seeing this guy on the big screen did not do him much justice! In real life, he transcended gorgeous. His name I cannot say, but I can describe him. I suppose there's no harm in that, is there??? He's a little taller than average, dark-skinned and nicely-toned. He wears his hair very close-cut, and yes, there are the obligatory tattoos. Several of them. Not enough to be annoying, thankfully. There is no moustache adorning this guy's face, but he does have a cute little goatee which compliments him. It gives him this kind of a rugged, mysterious look. Speaking of look...those eyes...those eyes...those eyes. Lord, those eyes. When they fell on me, I felt as if he knew every single one of my dirty little secrets. Things I don't tell anybody. Not my priest during confession, not my cousin, not even my best friend!

It wasn't until Lenon and I followed the crew inside the building, to film a fight scene, that I felt the full power of those eyes.

"Give it up! It's over!" Mr. Rapper yelled in a calm way, between clenched teeth, at the main villain during their final confrontation. Then, in one fleeting moment as I stood behind the main cameraman, the rapper looked right at me. It was only for one moment, but before I averted my gaze, those eyes said so much to me:

"Who are you?"

"I like what I see."

"I'm one of you."

"What's your name?"

"Come here, boy."

"You look important."

"Meet me outside in the parking lot so I can get your number and shit."

Let me tell you, my friend, I was so glad when one of the producers came over to offer me and Lenon bottles of spring water. I'd gotten so nervous and so hot all of a sudden, I felt as if I might pass out. Thankfully, I didn't. I wondered what my eyes had said, as I stood watching the crew wrap up the scene and then take their lunch break.

"Ready to go?" Lenon asked. I nodded, understanding he had to run off to work. Tempted as I was to stay, I decided not to pass up a free ride back home. But, I wonder if, one day, I will get the opportunity to work with that rapper. Perhaps I can find out the whole story behind those brown eyes. Perhaps one day.

Hope springs eternal

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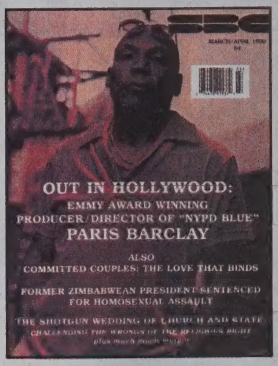

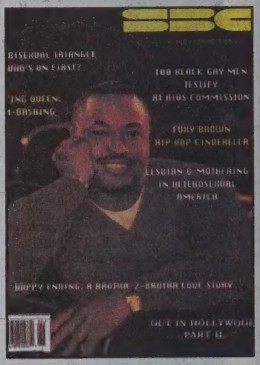
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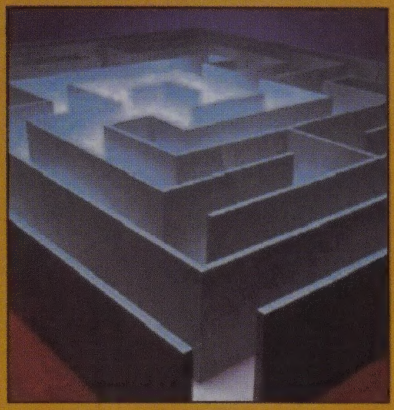

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